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FROM CONSTANTINOPLE
TO THE
HOME OF OMAR KHAYYAM

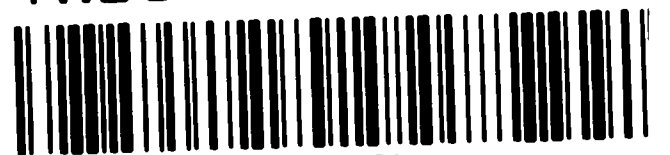


A-V-WILLIAMS JACKSON



FROM CONSTANTINOPLE
TO THE HOME OF OMAR KHAYYAM

This One



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From a painting by Jay Hambidge

AT THE TOMB OF OMAR KHAYYAM

The Sarcophagus may be seen in the Middle Arch of the Left Wing. (See page 258)

CONSTANTINOPLE
TO THE
HOME OF OMAR KHAYYAM

**TRAVELS IN TRANSCAUCASIA AND NORTHERN PERSIA
FOR HISTORIC AND LITERARY RESEARCH**

WITH OVER TWO HUNDRED ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP

BY

A. V. WILLIAMS JACKSON

**PROFESSOR OF INDO-IRANIAN LANGUAGES AND SOMETIME ADJUNCT
PROFESSOR OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
IN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, AUTHOR OF 'PERSIA
PAST AND PRESENT' AND OF 'ZOROASTER,
THE PROPHET OF ANCIENT IRAN'**

New York

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1911

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TO
MY FRIEND AND FELLOW-TRAVELER
ALEXANDER SMITH COCHRAN

‘Long they thus travellèd in friendly wise
Through countreyes waste and eke well edifyde.’
—SPENSER, *Faerie Queene*.

ERRATA

P. vii, for 1908 read 1910.

P. 77, note 2, for Caspia read Caspiac.

PREFACE

THE kind reception given to my previous volume, *Persia Past and Present*, has encouraged me to describe the first half of two subsequent journeys made through Northern Iran, Transcaspia, and Turkistan in 1907 and 1908 for the purpose of scholarly research. The portion included in the present book gives an account of the route from Constantinople, along the shores of the Black Sea and the Caspian, across Northern Persia, and into Russian Asia. The second section, which is planned to appear later, will cover the territory traversed beyond the Caspian into the Heart of Asia.

Among the generous criticisms of the book that appeared five years ago was a special comment by George Edward Woodberry in approval of the 'blending of scholarship and travel—the research side imparting a touch of romance, and dignifying the travel.' I hope that the present pages may not be found to fall too far below the standard which the critic demanded to have maintained. For that reason I have refrained, as before, from an earlier idea of labeling certain chapters as 'dedicated to the special student,' because of their more technical contents, and of designating others as 'dedicated to the general reader.' It will not be found difficult to do so to do the appeal in either case.

The nature of the research determining the character of the book. If there be less of the present book, there is of civilization, the of man's influence.

religion, ran as a minor chord through the pages of the earlier volume ; in the present volume Alexander the Great, upon whose track I have traveled so extensively, adds another connecting link between the interests of East and West, while Omar's home, as a goal to visit, gave to the journey the semblance, at least, of a pilgrimage.

Most of the places described in these pages have been visited twice (some even three times) in the course of the travels, so the accounts of them will, I trust, be found fairly accurate. In several instances, moreover, it seemed convenient to combine the incidents or experiences of the different journeys into a single account, since the circumstances were practically the same. As to the general aim of the travels, the manner of observation, and the method of presentation, I may refer to what has been said already in the Preface of the companion book. Special attention has been given, as before, to the subject of illustration ; the material generally accessible has been augmented by photographs taken with my own camera or that of my fellow-traveler, supplemented by pictures secured by friends who live in Persia. In every case, where possible, I have acknowledged the source in the List of Illustrations, and I here express my added thanks and appreciation of the obligation. I wish at the same time to acknowledge my indebtedness to those writers, ancient and modern, who have left records of their own journeys in the territories named, or who have made researches along similar lines. The footnotes on every page will bear sufficient testimony to my sense of obligation in that respect.

There are certain particular friends who come in for a special score of recognition which I gladly record now and always. First, I may mention the friend of years and comrade on the longest of my journeys, Mr. Alexander Smith Cochran, of Yonkers, New York, whose name graces the dedication-page of this volume and whom I desire thus to assure of my true and lasting regard. At the same moment I wish to record my

thanks to President Nicholas Murray Butler and the Trustees of Columbia University for granting me leave of absence to travel in the East for the scholarly aims I had in view. Next, a special meed of praise is due to those representatives in high office at Washington, St. Petersburg, and Teheran, for the facilities they so generously offered to further the interests of my travels into the more remote regions that were visited.

And three fellow-workers know best the help they have so freely given. Dr. Abraham Yohannan, my associate in Oriental studies at Columbia, has been ready at all times to give assistance in translating passages from the Arab-Persian geographers which might throw light on the history of the cities on the route. To my pupil and aid, Dr. Louis H. Gray, once Fellow in Indo-Iranian Languages at Columbia, I owe all thanks, not only for reading the entire book in manuscript with an eye to detail and for adding valuable suggestions from his well-known store of scholarship, but also for perusing the proof-sheets as they passed through the press. At the same time my constant helper and adviser, Dr. George C. O. Haas, former Fellow in my Department at Columbia and now Instructor at the College of the City of New York, has stood at hand to lend his critical acumen with regard to each page of the proofs and the entire make-up of the book, besides preparing the Index, as in the case of the previous volume.

To each of these friends, and to others who come in for an unnamed share of thanks, I renew my gratitude as before. Time has increased the due that I owe and has enriched the appreciation that I feel, as well as my obligations to the Publishers and their corps of assistants, who have made the appearance of the book possible.

A. V. WILLIAMS JACKSON.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY,
October 10, 1911.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abh.	= Abhandlung.
A.H.	= (<i>Anno Hegirae</i>), Muhammadan era.
Bd.	= Bundahishn.
BR.	= Batson and Ross (see p. 229, n. 2).
c.	= (<i>circa</i>), about.
ch.	= chapter.
d.	= died.
Dāt.	= Datistan-i Dinik.
Dk.	= Dinkart.
ed.	= edition, edited by.
FG.	= FitzGerald (see p. 229, n. 2).
FHG.	= Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum.
Ges.	= Gesellschaft.
Grundr. iran. Philol.	= Grundriss der iranischen Philologie.
H-A.	= Heron-Allen (see p. 229, n. 2).
ibid.	= (<i>ibidem</i>), in the same work.
id.	= (<i>idem</i>), the same author.
JAOS.	= Journal of the American Oriental Society.
JRAS.	= Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.
JRGS.	= Journal of the Royal Geographical Society.
Lief.	= Lieferung.
NR.	= inscriptions of Darius at Naksh-i Rostam.
Ny.	= Nyayish.
OP.	= Old Persian.
op. cit.	= (<i>opus citatum</i>), the work previously cited.
P.	= Payne (see p. 229, n. 2).
pl.	= plate.
Sb.	= Sitzungsberichte.
SBE.	= Sacred Books of the East.
Sir.	= Sirozah.
s.v.	= (<i>sub verbo</i>), under the word.
Th.	= Thompson (see p. 229, n. 2).

tr.	= translation, translated by.
Vd.	= Vendidad.
Wh.	= Whinfield (see p. 229, n. 2).
WZKM.	= Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes.
Xerx. Alv.	= inscription of Xerxes at Alvand.
Ys.	= Yasna.
Yt.	= Yasht.
ZDMG.	= Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.
Zsp.	= Zatsparam.
Zt.	= Zeitschrift.



VIEW FROM CONSTANTINOPLE OVERLOOKING GALATA AND PERA

FROM CONSTANTINOPLE TO THE HOME OF OMAR KHAYYAM

CHAPTER I

ONCE AGAIN EASTWARD HO!

‘If you’ve ‘eard the East a-callin’, why, you won’t ‘eed nothin’ else.’

—KIPLING, *Mandalay*, 30.

A CHARITY BALL and a journey to the East seem to have little connection, yet so they had in the case of the third of my four visits to the Land of the Dawn. A few words will suffice to explain. It was at the Charity Ball in Yonkers, my home on the Hudson, that I chanced to be talking with my friend Alexander Smith Cochran, about the success which the evening had proved despite the furious storm of snow that raged outside with all the violence of early January. Somehow—perhaps recalling snows I had encountered in Iran—our conversation veered to travel in the Orient, and a moment later we had resolved to take a trip together to Persia and Central Asia, starting in the spring, when travel would be easier in the Province of the Sun.

The weeks went swiftly by, and we found ourselves betimes on an ocean liner, speeding for Europe with messages of *bon voyage* in our mail—among them Hamlet’s wish of ‘well be with you, gentlemen!’ There was a spirit of eagerness for the prospective journey which will best be appreciated by those who have traveled in Eastern lands. Hour after hour on board the ship we talked of Persia, Transcaspia, and Turkistan, of India, of Oriental problems, and of Alexander the

Great, who first threw open the Gates of the Morning to Greece and the Western world. In chats like these, with books and maps at hand, we developed our plans, and gradually laid out the route we wished to follow.

With the Eastern lodestar beckoning, there was little time for tarrying in Paris longer than a single day to complete the 'kit' for our journey and to greet some special friends who were as much interested in the Orient as we. Constantinople was the first goal we had in view, for I was particularly anxious this time to cross the Black Sea on my way to the Caspian, instead of traversing Russia, as I had done on my previous journey to Iran. The close of our busy day of preparations in the French capital found us on board the Oriental Express, booked for the sixty hours by rail to the great metropolis of the Ottoman Empire; and the third morning following saw us in Constantinople, amid balmy air and a flood of sunshine that lent added sheen to the Golden Horn as it swept past ancient Stambul.

Mosques, minarets, and madrasahs, with touches of color made more brilliant by the shimmer of the blue sea and dazzling Oriental sun; historic monuments, noble relics of the city's whilom glory as capital of the Byzantine Empire; thronged narrow streets where hurrying feet can scarce find space to avoid the packs of mangy curs that do duty as town-scavengers¹; busy bazars, shops, and booths with cross-legged Turks; bridges and boats; smiling gardens cheek by jowl with dilapidated cemeteries; towers and cupolas; terraced heights, laid out with broad thoroughfares and graced by up-to-date European buildings that bear witness to the modern progress of a new régime, 'Young Turkey'—these are the hopelessly jumbled impressions that crowd upon the senses as one first sees Constantinople.

Though in Europe, Constantinople belongs in part to Asia, and travelers who are familiar with types of border cities

¹ Since banished, as I noticed on my second visit in 1911.



MOSQUE OF SAINT SOPHIA, CONSTANTINOPLE

between East and West know well the *pousse café* effect of such Asiatic-European towns, which take on the composite complexion of the elements that make up the mixture, though the blend is never quite complete. The Turkish capital aptly illustrates the truth of this statement, even if the European tinge tends more and more to predominate over the Oriental tone.

Yet there is something irresistibly attractive about such cities—something easy-going, something truly cosmopolitan. In Constantinople the tourist in white flannels and soft cap, or in frock coat and top hat, passes quite as unnoticed among the motley-colored crowd as does the native with fez, baggy trousers, heel-less slippers, and slipshod gait. No more surprise is shown at, and no more attention is paid to, the latest accepted import of Western civilization than is evinced at the oldest remnant of Eastern custom that has lingered on, caught up in the eddying current of modern progress.

In respect to its location Constantinople occupies one of the most favored and picturesque situations in the world. The Bosphorus, the Golden Horn, and the Sea of Marmora unite in giving to it all the maritime advantages that easy access by water can bestow; and nature has lavishly lent of her beauty to adorn its site at every point. The general topography and the arrangement of the town are easy to grasp. Stambul, the city proper, occupies the jutting peninsula between the Sea of Marmora and the Golden Horn, or practically the position of ancient Byzantium. Galata, lying northward and eastward beyond the golden inlet, and rising toward the hillside, forms a suburban quarter; whilst Pera, crowning the height above it, stands out as the more European quarter of the town. In the distance to the east, across the Bosphorus, lies the old city of Scutari in Asia Minor. This is the Asiatic section of Constantinople, and its site corresponds to the ancient Chrysopolis, or 'Golden City,' although Scutari now is a center of modern education, fostered by the American College for Girls, just as Robert College, on the European side of the Bosphorus,

north of Constantinople, is a seat of Western learning for the training of young men.

In Constantinople one never loses sight of the historic past, for the city has been one of importance from ancient times.¹ Founded in the sixth century B.C., by Dorian Greeks, it became the flourishing metropolis of Byzantium, with a widely developed commerce throughout the Hellenic world. Centuries later, in 330 A.D., Constantine the Great chose Byzantium as the place for his new capital, dedicating it 'to the service of Christ' and giving it the appellation New Rome, though it has always since been known by the great emperor's name. Its power outlived the fall of Rome, and it still retained its place as the metropolis of the Byzantine, or Eastern, Empire until the Turks captured it, May 29, 1453. Since that memorable day it has been the Sublime Porte and the capital of the Turkish Empire. In that same eventful year of 1453 destiny made it the future mother of the Renaissance, for the revival of learning in Europe begins with the flight of the Greek scholars from Constantinople, carrying with them the treasures of Hellenic literature to scatter broadcast for the enlightenment of the Western world. Of most recent memory was the almost bloodless revolution of 1908, which gave the country a constitution and firm government, the old order giving place to the new, and the 'Young Turk' coming into being as a factor in the world's progress.

The public buildings of Constantinople are numerous and notable. Foremost among them is the famous Mosque of Saint Sophia. Built originally by Constantine as a Christian church, but later twice destroyed, it was constructed anew by Justinian in the sixth century, and remained dedicated to the service of Christ until the fifteenth century, when the city fell before the

¹ I must emphasize the fact that I have included this brief sketch of Constantinople merely because our visit to the city was an incident of the journey. Among the many books

accessible on the subject I would refer especially to the valuable work by Grosvenor, *Constantinople*, 2 vols., Boston, 1900.



INTERIOR OF THE MOSQUE OF SAINT SOPHIA



MOSQUE OF AHMAD AND THE HIPPODROME, CONSTANTINOPLE



EAST END OF THE SARCOPHAGUS



WEST END OF THE SARCOPHAGUS



SOUTH SIDE OF THE SARCOPHAGUS
(Alexander in Battle with the Persians)

Turks, and the Church of Saint Sophia became a mosque. The architectural beauties of this masterpiece of the builder's art are too well known to need description here, for Hagia, or Saint, Sophia holds a special place among the ecclesiastical edifices of the world.

The Islamic note sounded by the mention of this now Muhammadan place of worship serves to recall the fact that the muazzin's cry is raised from the minarets of fully four hundred mosques in the city, so that the boast of having a mosque for each day in the year is no idle vaunt in Constantinople, the present center of the Moslem world. Among these Musulman sanctuaries may be named the Mosque of Sulaiman the Magnificent, dating from the sixteenth century and handsomely decorated in its interior with porphyry, marble, and mosaics, as well as enriched with rose-windows of stained glass, taken from the Persians. One is sure to have a glimpse also of the Mosque of Sultan Ahmad, built early in the seventeenth century, an edifice that rivals, with its six minarets, the holy Ka'ba at Mecca.¹

Of high antiquity, and one of the sights of the city, is the ancient race-course, the Hippodrome, which on the east lies close to the Mosque of Ahmad, not far from Saint Sophia. The name *At-maidān*, 'horse-course,' which it bears in Turkish today, is merely a rendering of the Greek *Hippo-dromos*, thus keeping up at least the content of the old tradition, although the present extent of the course is much less than that occupied by the Hippodrome in days of old, and its original surface is now covered twelve feet deep with earth and sand.² This scene of

¹ See Grosvenor, *Constantinople*, 2. 666-672, 676-684.

² An excellent description of the Hippodrome is given by Grosvenor, *The Hippodrome of Constantinople and its Existing Monuments*, London, 1889, which is reproduced in the same author's *Constantinople*, 1. 319-353.

For an account of the Hippodrome in the time of Sulaiman the Magnificent and a woodcut of it by Peter Koeck, about 1530, see Wiegand, *Der Hippodrom von Konstantinopel zur Zeit Suleimans d. Gr.*, in *Jahrbuch des kaiserlich deutschen archaeologischen Instituts*, 23. 1-11, Berlin, 1909.

spirited contests in times gone by owed its beginnings to the Roman emperor, Septimius Severus, about 203 A.D., and its completion to Constantine, who lavished treasures upon it. Among these precious gifts was the Column of Brazen Serpents, brought from Delphi. This serpentine shaft was once a memorial of the victory of Grecian arms over the Persians at Plataea, and it is still to be seen in the midst of the Hippodrome, being one of the three old monuments that have been preserved there. The other two relics are the Egyptian Obelisk from Thebes, and the so-called Built Column, which was restored by Constantine the Seventh, who reigned from 911 to 959. Together these three help to mark the line of the *spina*, or central barrier, past which the chariots rushed at breakneck speed to graze the goal post at the end, only to dash back again seven times around the wild course, either to triumph or defeat. Today the easy-riding victoria or phaeton drives comfortably around the historic arena, not for the prize and laurel wreath, but for the reward of so and so many piasters extra as bakshish for the tour.

A score and more of interesting places throughout the city are ready to engage the attention and amply to repay the time spent in a visit; but our interest on this occasion was of a more special character. It was centered in the Imperial Ottoman Museum and the rich treasures of antiquity — rare sculptures, tablets, and inscriptions — that are gathered there. The collection of sepulchral monuments in the museum is incomparably fine; but the gem of the entire exhibit is the so-called Sarcophagus of Alexander the Great, which was discovered at the site of ancient Sidon in 1887. Long had I wished to feast my eyes upon the beauties of this wonderful monument, particularly as I had traveled much on Alexander's track in Persia and India. To have a glimpse of the precious relic would surely lend added inspiration for our journey through Asia. This masterpiece of Attic art, for it is Attic in origin, though found in Phoenicia, dates from the latter part of the fourth century B.C., and is wrought of beautiful Pentelic marble.

The skill of the architect, sculptor, and painter have all been united in its execution. In form it is the model of a Greek temple, considerably elongated in shape, being about ten and a half feet in length, five and a half in width, and seven feet in height.¹ Each element and part, whether basement, façade, architrave, frieze, or cornice, or the low-gabled pediment of the wonderfully ornate roof — to speak still in architectural terms — is a paragon of design and a triumph of artistic execution. The groups of figures chiseled in high relief on the sides, ends, and tympanums of the cenotaph (for it is now empty of the remains once gloriously interred within) are models of carving.² Then, to give final perfection, the painter's brush has added a delicate touch of color to the sculptures, thus imparting warmth to the chill marble, even though the tones of the pigments are now fading from exposure to the light.

On the side of the sarcophagus facing the south, as it now stands in the hall of the museum, is portrayed a spirited scene of battle, Issus or Arbela, in which the Greeks are represented as triumphing over the Persians. On the reverse side, or northern face, is an animated scene of the chase. In this latter the Greeks and Persians, now friends, join in a lion-hunt and in the pursuit of a stag — the Greeks hastening to the aid of a brother Persian hard pressed by a lion, which is graphically pictured as tearing the chest of the Iranian's horse. In both the battle-scene and the hunting-scene the mounted figure on

¹ For a full account of the sarcophagus and its discovery, and of the theories regarding its identification, see Hamdy Bey and Th. Reinach, *Une Nécropole royale à Sidon*, Paris, 1892; and consult the excellent summary in the guidebook of the Ottoman Museum by André Joubin, *Monuments funéraires*, 2 ed., Constantinople, 1898. The measurements in meters, as given by Hamdy Bey and Reinach (p. 64) and by Joubin (p. 60), are: 8 m.

18 cm. × 1 m. 67 cm. × 2 m. 12 cm. Essentially the same figures (though differing in the height) are given in feet and inches by Coufopoulos, *A Guide to Constantinople*, p. 106, 3 ed., London, 1906, as follows: 10 ft. 8 in. × 5 ft. 7 in. × 8 ft. 2 in.

² Even such a detail as the difference between the frontlock of the Persian horses and of the Greek horses is noticeable.

the left is easily recognizable as Alexander, who dominates the entire scene by his heroic presence. The two ends, east and west, which form the head and foot of the sarcophagus, as well as the gabled tympanums that crown these ends, are sculptured with similar scenes, Persian and Greek, and, like the others, each is a *chef d'œuvre* in its way.¹

It is impossible here to attempt any description of the scenes in detail or of the sarcophagus as a whole. For such particulars I must refer to the writings of Hamdy Bey, to whose archaeological zeal we owe the recovery of the masterpiece, and to the discussions by Théodore Reinach, André Joubin, and others who have studied the subject.² My only point here has been to bring out the association of Greek with Persian, and the connection between East and West, as symbolized in this nonpareil of Attic workmanship.

There is something pathetic in the fact that the name of the great artist who conceived and executed the design is unknown. Scholars are agreed, however, that he must have lived in the last quarter of the fourth century B.C., and specialists have sought to discover in his work traces of the influence of Grecian sculptors of renown, though with no really well-defined success.³

¹ The scene figured on the eastern end is a combat; a Persian horseman thrusts his lance at a fallen Greek warrior, while other Persians and Greeks join in the fight. On the tympanum above this is a scene of a massacre or conflict in which only Greeks take part. On the western end five Persians engage in a panther hunt; on the tympanum above this a Persian horseman, with other Persians on foot, fights against several Greeks, also on foot.

² Some of these authorities are cited by Hamdy Bey and Reinach, *Une Nécropole*, pp. 125-126. Special reference may be made to the articles by Studniczka, in *Jahrbuch des*

deutsch. archaeol. Instituts, 9. 204-244, Berlin, 1895; Judeich, *Der Grabherr des Alexandersarkophags*, *ibid.* 10. 165-182, Berlin, 1896; Perdrizet, *Vénatio Alexandri*, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 19. 273 (cf. 276), London, 1899; Winter, *Archaeologischer Anzeiger für 1894*, p. 15, 1894; Sittl, in *Archaeologie der Kunst*, pp. 656, 684, 685, in Müller's *Hdbch. d. klass. Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 6, Munich, 1895; E. von Mach, *Handbook of Greek and Roman Sculpture*, p. 398, Boston, 1905.

³ The name of the Greek artist Lysippus seems to be most often thought of in this connection. Cf. Gardner, *A Handbook of Greek Sculpture*, p. 428, London, 1905.

Still more difficult than the riddle of authorship is the problem of determining for whose mortal remains the magnificent coffin was chiseled. The first and natural inference was that it must have been designed for Alexander, as all students of Greek art concede that he is twice (and possibly thrice) represented in the scenes carved on its sides. There are serious obstacles, however, in the way of this assignment, especially the difficulty of accounting for the presence of the sarcophagus at Sidon, whereas tradition holds that Alexander's remains were finally laid to rest at Alexandria. For that reason, even though the tomb still goes popularly under Alexander's name, and although, as Joubin emphasizes, there is nothing *à priori* to refute the hypothesis that it was originally at least 'ordered and executed' — *commandé et exécuté* — for his coffin, nevertheless, the consensus of scholarly opinion is practically unanimous in the view that the marble was not chiseled to receive Alexander's body.

But if we may not 'trace the noble dust of Alexander,' as Hamlet might, till found resting in the marble's cold embrace, then whose casket was it? The hypothetical answers to this very pertinent inquiry are numerous.¹ Possibly it held the body of one of his generals. Among this number the names of Perdiccas or Parmenion have been doubtfully suggested; the former met death by assassination in Egypt, and the latter was put to death in Media by Alexander's orders.² The proposal seems hardly tenable. The right of Laomedon to be considered has been warmly maintained, but is open to equal objections.³

¹ For the names of some of the possible claimants as perhaps portrayed in the carvings (including Laomedon), see Hamdy Bey and Reinach, *Une Nécropole*, p. 314.

² For the death of Perdiccas, see Plutarch, *Eumenes*, chap. 8, and Diodorus Siculus, *Hist.* 18, 36. For Parmenion's death cf. Curtius, 7. 2. 23-27; Arrian, 3. 26. 3-5; Plutarch, *Alex.*

49. 7; Diodorus Siculus, 17. 80. 3; Justin, 12. 5. 3. Regarding this hypothesis, see Hamdy Bey and Reinach, *op. cit.* pp. 77-78, and Judeich, *op. cit.* p. 168.

³ The champion for Laomedon is Judeich of Marburg, *op. cit.*, especially pp. 168, 170, 172-179, but this view is combated by Reinach (*Une Nécropole*, p. 314, n. 1), particularly the

A fanciful surmise, but one that appeals strongly to my own imagination, even if little attention seems to have been given to it, would seek grounds for assigning the sarcophagus to Alexander's favorite, Hephaestion, whom Alexander, when at Sidon, authorized to select a king for the Sidonians, and who named Abdalonimus for the office.¹ When Hephaestion died of fever at Ecbatana, Alexander's grief knew no bounds, as Plutarch says, and he planned for the remains of his favorite a magnificent tomb that was to be executed by Stasicrates and was to cost ten thousand talents.² There are, nevertheless, some objections against urging the plea, despite its attractiveness, and I shall content myself with simply presenting it. A title, still further, has been set up for Abdalonimus himself, whom Hephaestion named as king of Sidon, but the evidence in his favor is regarded as unsubstantial.³ The strongest plea that has been urged is that put forward by Reinach, according to which the sarcophagus once held the remains of Mazaeus,⁴ a

supposition that the Greeks had assumed the Persian dress (see also my note above on the horses' frontlocks, p. 7, n. 2). But it is the view adopted by Justi (also of Marburg) in *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 477. My own student and friend, Dr. Gray, also inclines to the belief that the coffin was probably that of a Diadochus, and that it was perhaps a miniature of Alexander's own burial-place, if we may attach any credence to the Pseudo-Callisthenes or to the templar form of Alexander's own tomb; see Julius Valerius, *Res gestae Alex. Mag.* 3. 57.

¹ See Curtius, 4. 1. 15-26; Justin, 11. 10; and other references in Eiselen, *Sidon*, 69-71, New York, 1907. Joubin, *op. cit.* p. 15, merely mentions Hephaestion's name by the side of Parmenion and Abdalonimus as claimants, but without entering into a discussion of the matter.

² Plutarch, *Alexander*, 72. 3, and cf. Jackson, *Persia*, p. 165.

³ The claim in behalf of Abdalonimus was put forward by Studniczka, *Die Sarkophage von Sidon*, in *Verhandlungen der zweiundvierzigsten Versammlung deutscher Philologen und Schulmänner in Wien*, 1893, pp. 91-92, Leipzig, 1895; idem, *Ueber die Grundlagen der geschichtlichen Erklärung der sidonischen Sarkophage*, in *Jahrbuch des kaiserlich deutschen archäologischen Instituts*, 9. 243, Berlin, 1895. Against Studniczka's view see Hamdy Bey and Reinach, pp. 392-395 and 316, n. 1; cf. also Joubin, p. 13.

⁴ See Reinach's discussion in Hamdy Bey and Reinach, *Une Nécropole*, pp. 317-320 and 341. It must, however, be remembered that Alexander confirmed Mazaeus in his satrapy of Babylon, where he remained until his death.

Persian satrap, who died in 328 B.C. Mazaeus held a post as governor of Babylon under Darius, and was therefore first the foe of Alexander, though he became the conqueror's friend after the downfall of the Achaemenian fortunes. According to this view, the central figure of a Persian in three of the sculptured groups would be taken as an effigy of Mazaeus. If such an explanation be accepted, it must be said that the Persian governor had certainly the richest funeral casket that the world has ever seen. But again we must confess that the hypothesis is merely guessing, even though it be ingenious guessing, and we must await the acquisition of more material or of greater knowledge than our present archaeological grasp has at command, before we can be at all sure; and it may be that we shall never know definitely about the real ownership of the wonderful cenotaph.

If, therefore, we must conclude, as Keats did with the Grecian Urn, to allow 'this foster-child of Silence and slow Time' to 'tease us out of thought,' we may equally concede that the 'Attic shape' of the marble at Constantinople mutely records for all time the early tale of conflict and union between West and East; and from the elements blended so truly and so exquisitely in this monument of death we may repeat with the poet:—

'Beauty is truth, truth beauty — that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.'

CHAPTER II

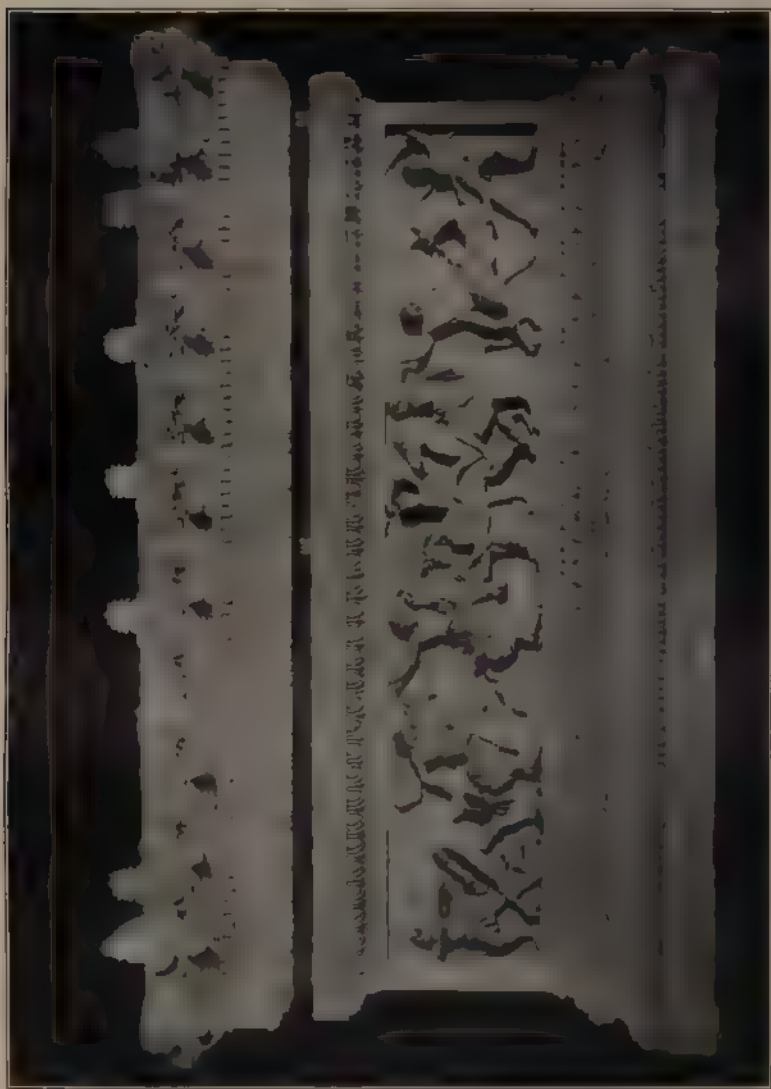
FROM THE BLACK SEA TO THE CASPIAN

‘ Off to sea again.’

—SHAKESPEARE, *Tempest*, 1. 1. 58.

It was just daybreak when I was roused by a loud rap at my door and heard a voice call, ‘ Sir, wake up — there’s a Russian steamer arrived in port and ready to start at ten o’clock for Sevastopol and Batum.’ It was the voice of Demetriou, our Greek guide in Constantinople, whom we had stationed on watch the night before to bring news of any craft, even a lighter or a tank ship, that might convey us across the Black Sea before the regular mail steamer to Batum, which was not due to call for a week. The tidings were welcome, for they meant that we should save time in this way; and Demetriou, with an unwonted enthusiasm, due to early rising or late retiring, urged the advantages of a prompt start. With everything thus favorable, we lost no time in bundling our luggage together for the faithful courier to transfer from the hotel to the steamer, and we were soon ensconced on the after deck of the *Pushkin* long before the hour of sailing.

The morning was a glorious one, and it was Easter Sunday, a fortnight behind our own Easter according to the Russian calendar. Captain, officers, crew, and passengers alike seemed to feel in a holiday humor; and every one, from the bridge to the forecastle, hailed the other with a kiss on both bearded cheeks as they met and exchanged good wishes for the Paschal season. The engines began to revolve, our prow headed north-eastward into the Bosphorus, and we were off at last for a five days’ voyage, coasting the northern shore of the Black Sea.



THE SO-CALLED NAIOPHAGUS OF ALPHEUS, CONSTANTINOPLE
(North Side — A Hunting Scene)

Stambul with Seraglio Point, Galata, and Pera, like distant Scutari on the Asiatic side, were soon gliding astern in the vanishing panorama, and their place was quickly taken by the first of that brilliant series of triumphs of Eastern and Western architecture which line the shores of the Bosphorus Strait. First the snowy sheen of the Dolma Baghtchah Palace, a seraglio built half a century ago by Sultan Abd al-Majid, flashed into view. Beyond it, clear mirrored in the blue Bosphorus, rose the marble façade of Cheraghan, a sumptuous sarai erected at fabulous expense by Sultan Abd al-Aziz, in 1867 (since burned, in 1911); and its brilliant image, stretching, with the adjacent princely palaces, for nearly half a mile along the water front, seemed to reflect the magnificence of its forbidden interior. Then, from the hill crest back of both these palaces of dreams, there peered out from the emerald of its leafy surroundings the less ostentatious but more famous Yildiz Kiosk, the abode of the now deposed Sultan Abd al-Hamid II. The fortunes of this palace, whose renown the hand of fame has tarnished rather than burnished, have all been changed — changed with the changes of the times rung in by the revolution of 1908.

Our steamer is by this time well up the Bosphorus. This famous strait of water, which is sometimes only a little more than a mile broad, sometimes even scarcely half that width, calls up a host of classic and Oriental associations along the eighteen miles of its banks. Gossip, old as Olympus, has never failed to repeat the fabulous tale of how Zeus, in the form of a bull, crossed its waters when pursuing the beauteous but frenzied Io, transformed into a heifer; and talebearing legend has perpetuated the myth in the fanciful etymology of Bos-poros as Ox-ford. But enough of myth and legend! From the realm of history we know that not only vandal Goths and consecrated Crusaders have crossed its narrow channel, but Herodotus tells us that the great Darius led his Persian hosts across it on a bridge of boats in 513 B.C., when

making an expedition against the Scythians prior to his invasion of Greece.¹ We can see the place, as it is pointed out on the west bank under the height of Rumaili Hissar. A Turkish fortress, built in 1452, now crowns the elevation at this narrow span, and near it rise the buildings of Robert College, founded by American philanthropy within our own time; while close to these halls of learning stands the very rock where Darius's throne is believed to have been placed as he watched his countless army crossing from Asia into Europe. How mighty have been the events that this storied height has looked upon since then!

As our craft steamed along, one could note that the shores, now narrowing and now expanding, were close enough at times to bear out the classic statement that persons might converse with those on the opposite side, or even that birds might be heard singing and dogs barking across its narrow banks.² Soon we were close to the channel's mouth. Here lay the Symplegades, or Cyanean Rocks, of classic fame, guarding on either side the entrance into the Black Sea, and fabled to have dashed together ever and anon, crushing the venturesome bark that dared to pass between their hostile cliffs. One of these islands still stands on the left, near the European shore; the other, to the right, adjoining the Asiatic bank, has gradually been washed away by the action of the waves till it has practically disappeared.³ Happily since the day when Jason and the Argonauts slipped in between the clashing sides, these Wandering Rocks, as Homer calls them, have become forever fixed, so that our steam-driven ship sailed swiftly by, without a menace of the mischance that cost the oar-propelled *Argo* a part of her poop on that memorable voyage of antiquity.⁴

¹ Herodotus, *History*, 4. 83-89, and cf. Justi, *Geschichte Irans*, in *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 442-443; see also Grosvenor, *Constantinople*, 1. 165.

² Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 6. 1. 2.

³ Grosvenor, 1. 199-205.

⁴ Homer, *Od.* 12. 59 ff. Apollonius Rhodius, 2. 551-620. Compare many more references in Gruppe, *Gr. Myth. und Religionsgesch.* pp. 396, n. 13, 397, n. 3, Munich, 1906.



THRONE ROCK OF DARIUS ON THE BOSPORUS



THE DOLMA BAGHTCHAH PALACE ON THE BOSPORUS



THE BOSPORUS AT RUMELI HISSAR, WHERE DARIUS CROSSED



MUSEUM OF SEVASTOPOL

On even keel, and under a serene sky as azure as the deep, we swept into the waters of the Black Sea, the Pontus Euxinus of historic fame and evil reputation from the days of antiquity. The Greeks were wont once to call this vast inland sea by the name *A-xenos*, 'In-hospitable,' because of its treacherous nature and the savage character of the tribes that lived on its shores. Later they ameliorated the harsh title and euphemistically dubbed the sea *Eu-xenos*, 'Very Hospitable, Kindly to Strangers.' The mighty sheet of water, as we saw it, lived up to its latter name and was on its best behavior. True though in general may be Othello's simile of 'the Pontic sea, whose icy current and compulsive force ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on,' there was nothing to suggest the image on this particular day.¹ Byron's ribald lines, which found a rhyme for Euxine in a seasick jingle, fell flat at the moment for lack of aptness. Poet and dramatist alike could have sung of the sea on this particular occasion in terms only of the highest encomium as we reeled off knot after knot in our Mayday course. But some of our fellow-passengers had sorrowful tales to tell of this same Euxine when Boreas lashes its wintry waves into fury.

The huge expanse of the Black Sea covers an area of more than seven hundred miles in length and almost four hundred miles in breadth at its widest part. This immense surface of nearly one hundred and seventy thousand square miles is plied by merchant vessels of all nations, though by the Treaty of Paris in 1856 no warship may sail its waters. The prohibitory provision against vessels of war and fortified stations was abrogated by Russia in 1870; but she later paid dear for the violation when, after the war with Japan in 1905, a mutinous crew on one of her own ironclads seized the ship and trained the guns on Odessa and Sevastopol.

Twenty-eight hours of superb sea-weather brought our craft into the land-locked harbor of Sevastopol, where everything was in gala array for the Russian Easter Monday. The ships

¹ Shakespeare, *Othello*, 3. 3. 453-455.

lying at anchor in the roadstead were bright with bunting, and the streets of the town were lined with holiday-makers in festive garb to match it.

Sevastopol is a place of some fifty thousand inhabitants and is a naval port of the highest significance to Russia. The part which it played in the Crimean War, two generations ago, when Turkey, Great Britain, and France were combined in arms against Russia, and when Sevastopol was the center of action and the object of a long siege, is still fresh in memory. The allied forces reduced it and victoriously entered it on Sept. 11, 1855, only to yield it up again to the government of the Czar by the Treaty of Paris in the following year. Today the visitor is promptly reminded of the official head at St. Petersburg, for he is immediately obliged to hand in his passport, without which a traveler in Russia has practically no existence, and he learns by experience to cherish this guarantee of free passage with the same care that he guards his letter of credit.

A glimpse of the city is worth the while, as its history goes back to the ancient Greek colony of Chersonesus, which name is still perpetuated in the ruins of Kherson or Korsun, a short distance to the west of the present town. Even in the sixteenth century Sevastopol had not come into existence, for its site was then occupied by the Tatar village of Akhtiar, a settlement that owed its origin to the Mongol invasion of the Crimea. Sevastopol itself, 'the August City,' was founded by Catharine the Second of Russia, in 1784, and the city today is almost wholly Russian, with only a slight tincture of the Orient. The military history of the town, for such a history it is, is summed up in its Museum, filled with mementos of the Crimean War. Its religious history is epitomized in the presence of the Cathedral of St. Vladimir, for we must bear in mind that Russia originally entered into the war with Turkey, which ultimately embroiled France and Great Britain, on the claim of defending her right to be the protector of the Greek Christians in the Turkish dominions.



PORTAL OF BAIDAR BETWEEN SEVASTOPOL AND YALTA



ROAD TO YALTA OVERLOOKING THE BLACK SEA



TERRACE OVERLOOKING THE BAY OF YALTA

Our drive around the city was hardly completed when the sunset gun of the fortress rang out and we sat down to an excellent dinner at the cosmopolitan restaurant near the Hotel Kist. The hour waxed late in conversation, with the key-note of East and West running through the talk, and it hardly seemed as if sleep had begun before the fortress gun boomed out once more with the announcement of dawn. The sun had not climbed far above the horizon before a three-horsed troika drew up at the door, and we took our seats to scurry (a Russian word, by the way) on our long drive of more than fifty miles across the lower end of the Crimea and over the Euxine road to Yalta.

The bells at the horses' throats rang out merrily in the clear morning air as we dashed out of the city into the rolling country beyond, and the crested lark caught up the note in a matin of good cheer. Undulating plain, dale, hilltop, and steep decline were passed by in succession at a rapid gallop, when suddenly some gravestones and a distant monument rounded up my wandering thoughts with a sharp turn, for we were nearing the historic scene of Balaklava. 'Half a league, half a league, half a league onward' I had learned in schoolboy days from my mother's volume of Tennyson; but never did I form a real conception of the scene till I saw the gorge between the encroaching hills with 'cannon to right of them, cannon to left of them,' and that 'valley of death' into which the gallant Six Hundred rode to destruction.

The Tatar village of Baïdar brought me back from past European memories to present Oriental impressions, and after that to an enjoyment of some of the most beautiful scenery that nature has anywhere to show. Not that the humble Tatar hamlet has that to offer, but near to it, and taking from the village its name, Portal of Baïdar, is a gateway of stone that opens into a wonderful vista. As one looks through the deep frame of the picture, there suddenly bursts upon the vision a chaos of skyey crags, scarped rocks, sheer declivities,

and a sweep of sea magnificent in the extreme. The steep zigzag descent, through the archway of Foros piercing the living rock, past a Russian Greek church cresting a height, and among a wilderness of rugged peaks and jagged cliffs that beetle over the blue Euxine, gives a thrill of excitement that enhances twofold the enjoyment of the beautiful. This doubled sensation, ever renewed, melted into a feeling of aesthetic pleasure, heightened by the sunset glow, as we drew nearer to the splendid Bay of Yalta some six hours later. The driveway was then between rich country-houses with green lawns and luxurious shade trees, and past the parks of the Imperial Domain at Livadia, with their almost tropical exuberance of vegetation. In good style our troika galloped up before the terrace of the Hotel de Russie, from whose garden surroundings a myriad electric lights flashed forth as darkness fell, and illuminated the broad paths leading down to the quay where our vessel lay ready to convey us farther on our journey towards the East.

Steaming on the Black Sea under conditions of weather so perfect was like a pleasure outing on a yacht. A call at Feodosia gave a chance to see how a modern commercial port may inherit the advantages of ages past. Founded under the name of Theodosia as a colony of the Milesians in the sixth century B.C., it soon became the granary of Greece, nor has it ever lost its tradition of being a thriving center of export for cereals. The Genoese were proud to hold it while they were masters of the sea in the thirteenth century; the Turks knew its worth when they took it later; and the Russians recognized its value when the place passed into their sovereign hands. The old walled town that rises on a slight elevation from the shore shows traces of the varied historic past; the new Russian city, skirting the strand, is modern in its way, commercial in tone, and prosperous, even to the possession of villas by its ruble-rich merchants.

Another day and we hove in sight of Gagri, a favorite seaside and health resort for the Russians, which lies nestled



FRODOSIA ON THE BLACK SEA



A VILLA AT FRODOSIA

among pine groves between sea and mountains, like our own Mount Desert in Maine. So popular has this watering-place become that the ship is sure to have numbers of passengers disembarking and embarking here. Among those who came on board were several who knew the Caucasus well, and could tell harrowing tales of bloody conflicts between Muhammadans, Armenians, and Russian Christians during the disturbed period that followed in the train of the Russo-Japanese war.

The hills of the Titan Caucasus began to loom up next day as we neared the eastern shores of the Black Sea and caught a distant view of Poti, the Phasis of the Greeks. This town was once the emporium of the farther end of the Euxine, and held its position till supplanted, within our own times, by Batum, about forty miles lower down. For ages Poti was the port from which were trans-shipped to Greece and Rome the goods that had been carried from the Orient by the Oxus route and via the Caspian Sea across Transcaucasia. An incidental mention of this fact to a fellow-passenger turned the conversation to the subject of trade with the East in antiquity. He told me of two old ruined forts between Sukhum Kalah and Poti, from which runs eastward a line of great wall, with rounded bastions, the whole matching the mighty rampart at Derbent on the Caspian, as will be described in the fifth chapter. One tradition, he said, ascribed its origin to Alexander the Great; but another assigned it to the time of the Mongol invasion, the story being that it was built largely to protect the caravan trade that came westward from India. This was but another version of the reports which I knew were current concerning a colossal line of fortifications that start at Derbent, as will be mentioned below, and it showed how generally familiar is the tale regarding their common origin.

Daylight, next morning, found our vessel safely warped to the pier in the harbor of Batum, with the ridges of the rugged Caucasus forming a snowy background to the scene.

Batum has become what Poti might have developed into if its

situation had only been more healthful ; but even in this latter respect Batum cannot boast too much, although Russia is doing everything to make its location a thoroughly salubrious one. The city's history, like that of its displaced rival, is a long one, for near its site lay ancient Petra and still earlier Bathys. The Turks made nothing of the town while they held it, so far as one can judge by the derogatory comments upon it during their rule ; but it began to pick up at once when ceded to Russia by the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 ; and it became a growing place with a brisk business and a large export trade, so that today it shows a predominance of West over East in the composite blending brought about by its active commerce.¹ By a topographical paradox, the Occidental portion of its inhabitants, Russians, Armenians, and Greeks, reside mostly in the eastern quarter of the town; the Musulman portion, Turks, Tatars, and Persians, live in its western quarter.

A pleasant promenade leads through the public gardens and along the main boulevard facing the sea. The vegetation has a touch of the tropical, for palms are seen lifting their fronds among other trees, while the snow still lingers on the distant hills. The chief edifice of the city is the Russian cathedral of Alexandro-Nevsky, which harmonizes well with the Muhammadan mosques in the Eastern tinge of its architecture. In the business section, the buildings of the European banks, commercial houses, stores for merchandise, wine-shops, and cafés form a Western offset to the native booths and bazars, the center of Oriental life.

As in other cities of the Caucasus, there is a constant intermingling of races radically different ; and this very dissimilarity of nationality, creed, ideals, and political views has led at times to riotous outbreaks, and even to bloodshed. In one of these disturbances, two years before our visit, the American consul was accidentally killed by a bomb ; nor were the newspapers

¹ On the noticeable improvement *Im Lande der Sonne*, pp. 20-26, Berlin, 1886.
that took place, see especially Brugsch,

lacking later in reports of assassinations of public officials in broad daylight in the city streets. All was quiet when we were there, and there was no interference with the extensive business interests of the place.

Those who are acquainted with commerce will recall the active export trade which Batum does in petroleum, as its direct connection with Baku via Tiflis, not only by rail but by six hundred miles of pipe line, makes it the Western headquarters for the shipment of oil from the naphtha wells on the Caspian. Nor is this all, for a lively traffic is carried on in the exportation of timber, hides, honey, and wax, not to enumerate a list of ordinary products in which the merchants do business. The mineral resources found in the neighboring mountains and in the ore-beds of the Caucasus have attracted both European and American capital, and the investments promise to pay an ever increasing return for the venture. So much for the general aspects of this commercial town.

From the historic side we were interested, in the environs, in the ruins of a castle of Queen Tamar, or Tamara, who ruled the Georgians in the twelfth century of our era. To her are ascribed the remains of numerous edifices and works of public benefit in the Caucasus, though all now lie in ruins. The fortress, at present sadly dilapidated, is located on an elevation about a half hour's drive outside of Batum. The low-lying stretch of road along the seashore, with marshlands on the other side, was naturally damp enough in the moist climate that prevails; but this particular afternoon the condition of the heavy atmosphere made the thick air still more foggy, so that it was impossible to have a clear glimpse of the ruined walls, especially for photographing. Yet, on ascending the mound, we could get a good idea of the stronghold and its barriers from the tumbled masses of débris. The commanding character of the height was made more strong by the swift stream that swept in its rear and turned with hurrying course into the sea. I pictured the defence which this citadel keep could set up for the

Amazon queen, who is portrayed as the embodiment of all that was noble and high. With all her prowess, peace above war was her aim, example and practice more than precept were her ideal, and her face seems to show combined gentleness and strength, if I may judge by a photograph I obtained from a painting on my earlier journey. Legends of the virtues of Tamara still live in the hearts of the Georgian people, and we know from the annals of her long reign (1184–1213) that her historic achievements entitle her to a prominent place among the number of women who have ruled the fortunes of a nation well.¹

A dangerous mishap to our horses and carriage occurred about a mile beyond Tamara's castle, and it might have brought our journey to a disastrous close. At a rickety bridge over a stream our horses suddenly bolted and plunged into the water, dragging the carriage over the string-piece, though luckily we sprang out of the vehicle in time to escape the fall. It seemed a miracle that the horses were not killed, but by the merest chance they had leaped into a spot where the water formed a deep pool between the jagged rocks, so that they escaped being dashed to pieces. The struggling animals were finally rescued, and the wagon was restored to the highway. We took good care on the homeward road to watch the skittish span at every doubtful point, and reached the city safely in time to depart for Tiflis, two hours after sunset.

The route by rail from Batum by the way of Tiflis to Baku traverses the ancient historic ground of Colchis, Iberia, and Albania, on the classic maps, answering in later times to Georgia and the surrounding districts, and in modern times to the whole territory known as Transcaucasia. The journey, which took weeks in ancient times to accomplish, is now easily

¹ See Holldack, *Von der Sage und dem Reich der Grusinischen Königin Tamara*, Leipzig, 1906 (dissertation), and consult the interesting chapter

on Tamara in Shoemaker, *Heart of the Orient*, pp. 40–64, New York, 1904.



BATUM WITH THE CAUCASUS IN THE BACKGROUND



PROMENADE AND THE CATHEDRAL OF ALEXANDRO-NEVSKY, BATUM



ON THE SEASHORE NEAR BATUM



TAMARA, THE GEORGIAN QUEEN

covered in less than twenty-four hours over the road of steel which links the Black Sea and the Caspian.

Hardly an hour has elapsed after leaving Batum before the line, skirting northwards along the shore, crosses the ancient caravan route, mentioned above, from Asia to Europe. The region is that of Kutaïs, corresponding nearly to the ancient Colchis, the home of Medea, and the goal of Jason when in quest of the Golden Fleece. A night's ride in the capacious and fairly well equipped Russian cars was no hardship, and we arrived at early morn at our destination, the Capital of the Caucasus. Here I was glad to greet old Rustom, the Georgian who had been my guide to the borders of Persia four years before, and to meet Hovannes Agopian, whom we familiarly called 'John,' our Armenian courier who was to accompany us on the present journey. We were sorry, through a change in our dates, to miss finding Safar Adilbegh, the young Persian from Tabriz and Teheran who had been with me through Persia, the time before, but he attended me on the next trip, proving competent as ever and still more useful, as he had added a knowledge of medicine to his previous accomplishments.¹

We decided to remain only a day at Tiflis, as I had spent several days there in 1903 and have given some impression of it elsewhere.² The town seemed to be quieter than when I first saw it, for then there had been riotous outbreaks and mob disturbances; and even now friends warned us to avoid any crowds or gatherings, lest a bomb should be thrown. Luckily we had no untoward experiences, but enjoyed our day roaming around the bazars, revisiting the Caucasian Museum, and seeing other points of interest in this thriving, busy city of many nations. There was time enough before our departure at evening to ascend the funicular cog-railway to the top of St. David's hill overlooking the town, and to enjoy the fine view before proceeding on our journey over somewhat familiar ground to Baku.

¹ See Jackson, *Persia*, pp. 55-56.

² See my *Persia*, pp. 8-15.

A day later found the train drawing into the handsome station of Baku on the Caspian, which I was entering for the fourth time (and have twice since entered). As I always count that the real journey to Persia begins at the Caspian Sea, I shall give a fuller description of this interesting mart of commerce on its shores, devoting to it the two chapters that are to follow.

CHAPTER III

BAKU, THE CITY OF OIL WELLS

‘From Badku and those fountains of blue flame
That burn into the Caspian.’

—MOORE, *Lalla Rookh*.

BAKU is a city founded upon oil, for to its inexhaustible founts of naphtha it owes its very existence, its maintenance, its prosperity. The flowing treasure that wells up from the hidden depths of its subterranean reservoirs brings occupation to thousands, wealth to tens of thousands, and light and heat to millions. At present Baku produces one-fifth of the oil that is used in the world, and the immense output in crude petroleum from this single city far surpasses that in any other district where oil is found.¹ Verily, the words of the Scriptures find illustration here: ‘the rock poured me out rivers of oil.’²

Oil is in the air one breathes, in one’s nostrils, in one’s eyes, in the water of the morning bath (though not in the drinking-water, for that is brought in bottles from distant mineral springs), in one’s starched linen — everywhere. This is the impression one carries away from Baku, and it is certainly true in the environs. The very dust of the streets is impregnated by the petroleum with which they are sprinkled; the soil of the home garden is charged with oil; and if

¹ Statistics on the annual yield of oil at Baku will be found below, p. 40. Compare also Shoemaker, *Heart of the Orient*, p. 84, and consult Henry, *Baku, an Eventful History*, pp. vii and 104,

London, 1906; this latter volume is the best work yet published on the general subject of Baku and its oil wells.

² Job 29. 6.

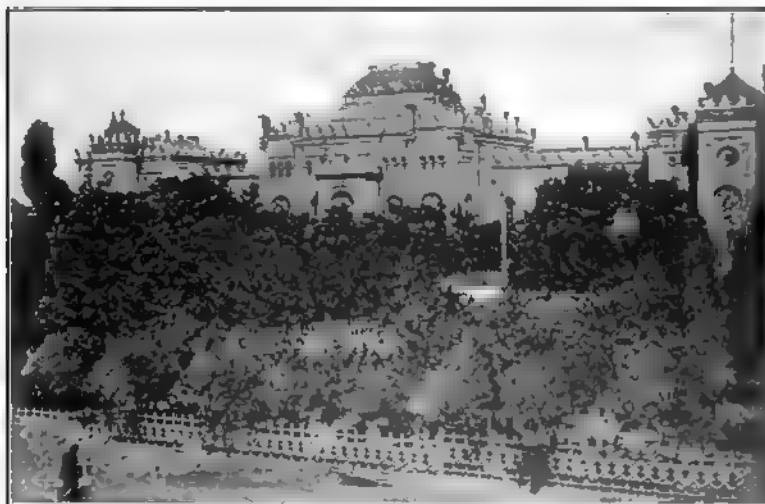
flowers are really to thrive, it is said that earth must be imported from Lankuran farther down on the Caspian. The busy wheels of commerce that roll out from Baku are lubricated with the native product; the engines and steamers are propelled by it; the coffers of the great petroleum companies are filled by it; and the bourse of the city's exchequer is governed by its rise and fall.

Long trains of tank cars line the track as one approaches Baku from Batum and Tiflis on the west, or from Beslan and Petrovsk on the north. A pall of smoke hangs its heavy drapery over the 'Black Town' (Tchorny Gorod) in the oil section on the eastern and northern outskirts of the city. Forests of wooden and iron pyramidal towers serrate the horizon as one looks over the petroleum belt of Balakhany, Sabunchy, and Romany to the north, or over Bibi-Eibat on the south. At times lurid flames burst into the sky if a conflagration takes place in one of these inflammable sources, and then there is danger that the titan torch may destroy everything in its radius, engulfing it in a veritable holocaust of flame.

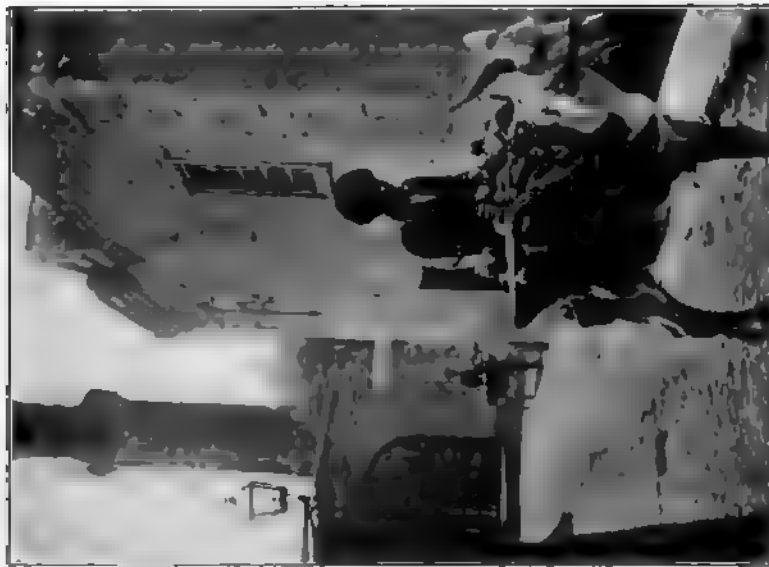
The train moves slowly as we draw to our destination, giving us a good opportunity to form a general idea of the city and its surroundings. A few minutes later the halt is made in the well-appointed railway station — a station worthy of Europe — and we crowd our way through a throng of Tatars, Armenians, Georgians, Persians, and Cossacks, gathered on the platform and waiting to scramble across the tracks to catch an outgoing local train, in which some Russian workmen have already taken seats. At the exit of the station a polite hotel porter is standing by the steps. He has French, besides several other languages, at his polyglot command, so that we are at once reminded of distant Paris, and feel an added sense of comfort when he assures us that his particular hotel is the very best in Baku. In a minute more our luggage is being tossed into one of the Russian phaetons in



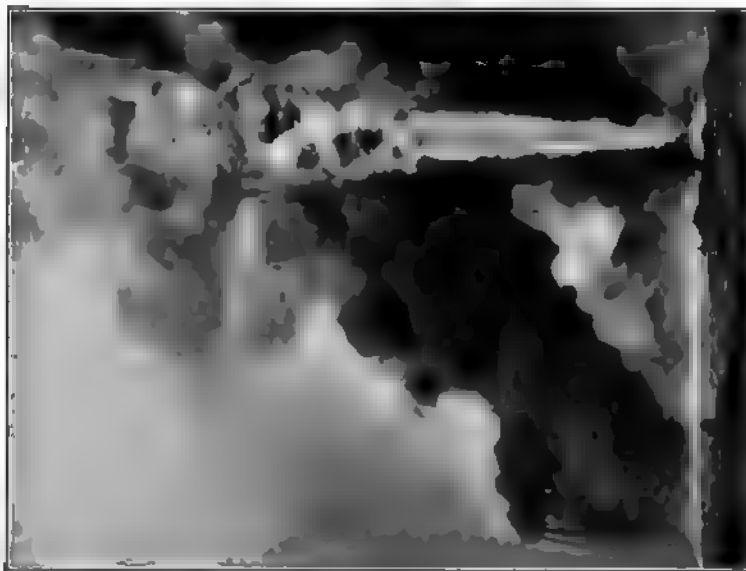
OVERLOOKING BAKU TOWARD THE BAY



THE RAILWAY STATION AT BAKU



A WATER VENDER NEAR THE PALACE OF THE KHANEH, BAKU



A FOUNTAIN AT BIBI-EBRAT IN FLAMES, BAKU

front of the 'stanzia,' and we gallop away to the Hotel de l'Europe.

The streets are dusty, and the hurrying tram-cars and a crowd of vehicles of every description add to the cloud of powdery sand that is swept into our eyes by the ever blowing wind—a wind that justifies the popular etymology of *Bākū* in Persian as *Bād-kūbah*, 'Wind-beaten.'¹ We wish at the moment that the streets had an extra sprinkling of the ever convenient oil, though in general the thoroughfares are cleanly kept and give the impression that the town is well looked after. Shops line either side of the way, and their lettered signs, in Russian, Arabic, and, sporadically, Hebrew, are supplemented by rudely painted pictures of boots, hats, clothing for men and boys, and what not. The styles represented must wait for a reincarnation in a far-distant cycle before the fashion comes round to them again. Yet these crude drawings help business, as the masses cannot read. Grotesque though they are, I fancy that some of our own show-window wax models or cigar-store wooden Indians could hardly afford to ridicule their far-off compeers on the Caspian! Anon we are at the door of our hotel—a fairly comfortable domicile, with attentive service and an excellent Russian-French cuisine.

As I have been in Baku a number of times, I feel fairly at home in the city and am even familiar with the odor of oil that one cannot forget in its suburbs. But, though perhaps over-sensitive on that point, I look back with pleasure to each visit; and I shall gladly welcome the chance to see this busy metropolis again if another opportunity takes me to the Caspian.

Old and new, ancient and modern, past and present, commingle in the make-up of Baku. It is the same repeated story

¹ There are several ways of spelling the name of Baku in the Eastern languages, such as *Bākūh*, *Bākūyah*, *Bākhūi*; cf. Kazem-Beg, *Derbend Nāmeḥ*, p. 142, St. Petersburg, 1851.

The etymology is uncertain; d'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque Orientale*, 1. 320, Paris, 1777, gives no ground for his derivation of the name from an eponymous hero called after a constellation.

of an Eastern town transformed into a Western city, or, rather, of a modern city of nearly a quarter of a million population sprung up out of an ancient settlement.¹ There is a common belief that the natural fires in its vicinity were associated from the earliest antiquity with the ancient worship of the Zoroastrians, but of this unproved claim I shall speak below. A local tradition maintains that the town existed under the name of Khansār long before the time of Alexander the Great though it then occupied a position somewhat south of the present site; and the account also narrates a fanciful legend how 'Aristoon' (Aristotle), at Alexander's bidding, destroyed the place by means of some artifice, after which the present Bādkūbah (Baku) came into existence.² In any event we have material in the early Arab-Persian geographers to trace the history of the town back for a thousand years.

Thus, Masudi (943 A.D.) speaks of Baku as having been ravaged by the Russians; he calls it 'the place of naphtha' (*naffātat*),³ alludes to its 'volcanoes,' and adds, 'there are wells of fire coming out of the ground, and there are islands opposite the naphtha-place in which there are wells of great fires that can be seen at a distance in the night'; he also mentions the 'white naphtha' produced here.⁴ Istakhri (951 A.D.) likewise tells of the presence of *naft*;⁵ while Mukaddasi (895 A.D.) draws attention to the significant fact that Baku is a seaport town.⁶ Yakut (1225 A.D.) states that one of the oil wells daily produces oil to the value of 'a thousand dirhams' (about \$200) — a mere bagatelle today — and adds that another well,

¹ These figures include the suburbs, Henry, *Baku*, p. 11.

² See Kazem-Beg, *Derbend Nāmeḥ*, p. 142, St. Petersburg, 1851, where the legend is recounted in detail.

³ Masudi, *Prairies d'or*, tr. Barbier de Meynard, 2. 18-25, Paris, 1865.

⁴ Masudi, *Muraj adh-Dhahab*, ed. De Goeje, *Bibl. Geog. Arab.* 8. 60, and *Prairies d'or*, tr. Barbier de Meynard,

2. 25-26. A remarkable pyrotechnic display of the oil burning on the waters in the Bay of Baku is sometimes made by throwing a lighted torch into the waves. This phenomenon is described by some of the writers mentioned below: Dumas (2. 43-44), Ussher (p. 209), Orsolle (p. 139), Henry (pp. 27-28).

⁵ Istakhri, ed. De Goeje, 1. 190.

⁶ Mukaddasi, ed. De Goeje, 3. 376.

close by it, 'flows night and day with white naphtha,' and that all the ground round about was rendered highly inflammable by the presence of oil.¹ The inscriptions on the buildings in the citadel, as given below, show that in medieval times Baku possessed wealthy and influential men, for only such citizens could have erected edifices so imposing.

As early as the thirteenth century European travelers began to visit Baku and to mention its oil products. The renowned Venetian, Marco Polo, in the second half of that century speaks of the territory in such terms as to leave no doubt that he means Baku, when he says: —

'On the confines towards Georgiana there is a fountain from which oil springs in great abundance, insomuch that a hundred shiploads [*v.l.* camel-loads] might be taken from it at one time. This oil is not good to use with food, but 'tis good to burn, and is also used to anoint camels that have the mange. People come from vast distances to fetch it, for in all the countries round about they have no other oil.'²

Two centuries later another Venetian, Josafa Barbaro, who traveled in Persia in 1474 up from Tabriz ('Thauris') to Derbent on the Caspian, where he spent several months, refers to 'Bachu' and 'the sea of Bachu,' as follows: —

'Vpon this syde of the [Caspian] sea there is an other citie called Bachu, whereof the sea of Bachu taketh name, neere vnto which citie there is a mountaigne that casteth foorthe blacke oyle, stynkeng horryblye, which they, nevertheless, vse for furnissheng of their lights, and for the annoynteng of their camells twies a yere. For if they were not anoynted they wolde become skabbie.'³

¹ For Yakut's statements see Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 78, and compare Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, pp 180-181.

² Marco Polo, ed. Yule, I. 48, London, 1875; see also Yule's notes *ad loc.* concerning rubbing the camels with oil; a similar statement is made in another connection by Barbaro (see

next paragraph). In 1404 Clavijs (Hakluyt Soc., pp. 93, 95) mentions the 'sea of Bakou.'

³ See Josafa Barbaro, *Travels to Tana and Persia*, tr. and ed. Thomas, Roy, and Stanley, p. 88, London, 1873 (Hakluyt). The date, 1474, is given on p. 50 of that work.

The earliest Englishman to come to the district of Baku was Anthony Jenkinson (Oct. 1562), but he says nothing about the place except to mention merely its name as 'Bacowe.'¹

The English agent of the Muscovy Company, Jeffrey Duckett, in his 'fift voyage into Persia,' in 1574, is more explicit.

'There is a very great riuer [i.e. the Kur] which runneth through the plaine of Iauat [= Javat], which falleth into the Caspian sea by a towne called Backo, neere vnto which towne is a strange thing to behold—for there issueth out of the ground a marueilous quantitie of Oyle, which Oyle they fetch from the vttermost bounds of all Persia; it serueth all the countrey to burne in their houses.

'This oyle is blacke, and is called *Neftē*; they use to cary it throughout all the country vpon kine and asses, of which you shall oftentimes meete with foure or fīue hundred in a companie. There is also by the said towne of *Backo* an other kind of oyle, which is white and very precious, and is supposed to be the same as that here is called *Petroleum*.'²

The German Olearius (1636) counts Baku among the few good harbors on the Caspian and tells how the 'Nefta,' which is produced in great quantities, is carried in skin bags ['Schleuchen'] and great casks ['Fudern'], and widely transported for sale.³

The Englishman John Bell, in 1715, makes the following statement regarding Baku and its petroleum sources:—

'Two days journey eastward from Niezbatt stand Absheroon and Backu, two considerable towns. At the former is a good harbour, reckoned the best in the Caspian Sea, except that of Astrabatt, which lies in the south-east corner of it. All the rest are so dangerous that they scarce deserve

¹ Jenkinson, ed. Morgan and Coote, *Early Voyages and Travels in Russia and Persia*, p. 138, London, 1886 (Hakluyt Society). Jenkinson came from Shamakha to Javat, and was at Shabran, which lay somewhat north of Baku, so he may possibly not have visited the city; see the old map in Hanway, *British Trade over the Caspian Sea*, 1. 344, London, 1753.

² See Duckett in Jenkinson, ed. Morgan and Coote, *Early Voyages*, p. 439–440, London, 1886 (Hakluyt Society). Duckett's first voyage was made in 1568 (1569).

³ Olearius, *Reisebeschreibungen*, pp. 215, 284, Hamburg, 1696 = earlier Eng. transl. by Davies, pp. 193, 197, London, 1662.



THE GARDEN AND OLD WALLS OF BAKU



ALONG THE QUAY AT BAKU

the name of harbours. In the neighbourhood of Backu are many fountains of Naphtha; it is a sort of petroleum, of a brown colour and inflammable nature. The Persians burn it in their lamps; no rain can extinguish it, but the smell is disagreeable. I have seen of it as clear as rock water.¹

The London merchant, traveler, and philanthropist, Jonas Hanway, author of a learned work on the Caspian Sea in the eighteenth century, gives an extended excerpt from the journal of the Scottish physician, Dr. John Cooke, 'relating to the route of the Russian embassy into Persia.' Six days were spent by the embassy in Baku, Feb. 6-12, 1747, and some of the memoranda are well worth quoting here as a description of the city at that date.

'In this city is a sumptuous palace of hewn stone, which the RUSSIAN bombs in 1722 [1723] had contributed to reduce to the ruinous state in which we found it. The PERSIANS say, that as the TURKS made use of it as a magazine, they will not repair it; but the truth is, they are in no circumstances to do any such thing. The rebellion of 1743 did not cost less than the lives of 15,000 men to the province and the adjacent country of Shirvan. Formerly many merchants lived here, especially INDIANS² and ARMENIANS, together with several TARTARS; and, in the single branch of raw silk, they used to export 400 bales of 25 batmans each [about 160 pounds]; but now they have scarce any vestiges of commerce. This city is said to have been built by the TURKS [?]: the fortification is semicircular, and the two points of it are extended into the sea. It is defended by a double wall, of which the inmost is lofty for a PERSIAN fortification. . . . As all the country here is impregnated with salt and

¹ Bell, *Travels in Asia*, ed. Pinkerton, 7. 288, London, 1811. Bell made his camp at 'Niezhatt,' in the vicinity of Baku, from Aug. 30 to Sept. 18, 1715 (cf. Pinkerton, 7. 273, 288), and appears to have visited Baku between Sept. 2 and 4, if we may judge from his statement of a 'two days journey eastward from Niezbatt' and his remarks about having seen the clear petroleum. He was in his camp at

'Niezhatt' again on Sept. 4; no mention is made of a fire temple at Baku. 'Niezhatt' (cf. *op. cit.* p. 313) is the same as 'Nizabad or Nizawoy' on the map of Hanway, 1. 344 (1753) and the modern Pristan Nizovaia, from which Baku lies southeast, not 'eastward.'

² The importance of this statement will be mentioned below in connection with the fire temple at Surakhany.

sulphur, the water, though esteemed wholesome, is very unpleasant.' [Details regarding the environs are here omitted.]¹

From the middle of the eighteenth century onward, the number of travelers visiting Baku, like George Forster (1784), S. G. Gmelin (about 1771), and those in the nineteenth century, has constantly increased, and reference to the most of them will be found below in connection with the celebrated fire temple.

In its long history Baku has seen many changes. Originally a part of the Persian Empire, it came under the power of the Arabs with the Muhammadan conquest in the seventh century A.D., but after the fall of the Caliphate it passed into the hands of the Khans, or powerful princes, of Shirvan, who held sway over it for several hundred years. In 1509 it was taken by Persia, but fell later before the Turks, only to be recaptured by Shah Abbas the Great. Early in the eighteenth century there arose a mightier crisis with far-reaching results. Peter the Great of Russia, when on his campaign in Persia, in 1722, set his heart upon Baku; and in the following year, 1723, his general, Matushkin, bombarded and took the place. It was restored to Persia in 1735, during the reign of Empress Anna, but was subsequently taken by Russia in 1806, and was finally ceded to the Czar by the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813.

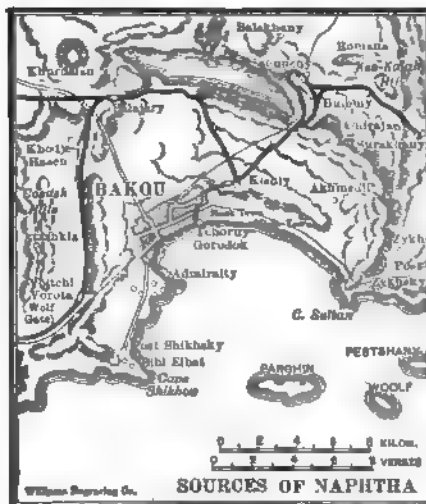
From the moment of Russian occupation dates the great commercial growth of the city. Steamers constantly ply between its harbor and Astrakhan on the north, Krasnovodsk on the east, and Anzali or Astrabad on the south side of the

¹ Hanway, *An Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea: with a Journal of Travels*, 4 vols. London, 1753; 3 ed. 2 vols. London, 1762 (1 ed. 1. 377-384; 3 ed. 1. 260-261). It appears that Dr. Cooke later regretted having communicated his material to Hanway, or felt that he had been misrepresented, and accordingly he published an independent

work entitled, *Voyages and Travels through the Russian Empire, Tartary, and Part of the Kingdom of Persia*, 2 ed. Edinburgh, 1778 (cf. 2. 379-380)—see George Forster, *Voyage du Bengale à Pétersbourg, traduit par L. Langlès*, 2. 343, n. 1, 356-359, n. 1, Paris, 1802. My authority for this is Langlès (*loc. cit.*), as the volume by Cooke is not accessible to me.

Caspian Sea, bringing or despatching great quantities of imported and exported goods, while the railway on either side of the Caucasus and the petroleum pipe-line to Batum never cease to convey its oil to all parts of Europe. It is true that the heterogeneous character of its population has at times been a drawback to progress ; and as recently as 1905 the streets flowed with blood in the riots and massacres that took place between the Tatars and Armenians and resulted in a temporary destruction of the oil fields by fire. We saw signs of the sanguinary struggle and heard stories of the atrocities committed ; but the wounds of this civil war have already been healed, and will soon be forgotten, even if the scars remain ; business was quickly resumed, and the town is in flourishing condition at this hour.¹

Topographically, the city lies almost at the middle point of a crescent formed by the bay that cuts with graceful sweep into the Apscheron Peninsula on the north, but turns its sickle-curve with a slightly jagged edge before it reaches the point that extends near Bibi-Eibat on the south. The town, as I have said, is a modern place sprung up on an ancient site. The Caspian, now lower than it was in olden times, has allowed this new town considerable space for spreading along the strand of the bay and to crowd its way rearwards, pushing old Baku back to its very walls. These walls mark the historic capital, the



BAKU AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

¹ An account of the uprisings be found in the volume by Henry, among the Orientals in 1905 will *Baku*, pp. 148-214.

stone-ramparted citadel of the Khans, and beyond them rise arid, rocky hills, bare of any trace of vegetation, and dreary enough, were it not that the eye can catch a glimpse of intervening green, below the fortress bulwarks, in the public gardens, once the possession of the Khans.

Russian Baku begins at the fine stone quay, which extends for a mile and a half along the shore and affords excellent opportunities for the shipping — steam craft and sailing vessels — that crowds its port in numbers. The entire modern section of the town, with its public square, cobble-paved or asphalted streets, and curbed sidewalks, is as European as St. Petersburg. We step out of the hotel into a phaeton with a Russian or Tatar driver to take us to the bank, post-office, and telegraph, or we walk from shop to shop, where all the up-to-date articles may be purchased. The Russian cathedral of Alexandro-Nevsky thrusts aloft its spire to overtop the towering Moslem minarets, and the Armenian church seeks to outdo its ecclesiastical rivals by its prominent position on the Parapet Square. A city hall for the Duma and several handsome edifices for educational purposes, one of the best being for girls, together with a technological institute and various governmental buildings, are as new as any in Europe or America.

The old town, the Oriental section, has the interest that is always imparted by a certain Eastern touch — and, I may add, smell. The Bala-Hissar, or 'High Citadel,' shuts within its walls the old palace of the Khans and two mosques, and it goes back to ancient times. The Persian Mustaufi, writing in 1340, speaks of the citadel as keeping the town in its shadow at mid-day by its commanding position.¹ The origin of this palace is sometimes ascribed to Shah Abbas the Great, of Persia (1587–1629), who is mentioned in the fourth tablet (D), referred to below;² but at least one (A) of the inscriptions, which

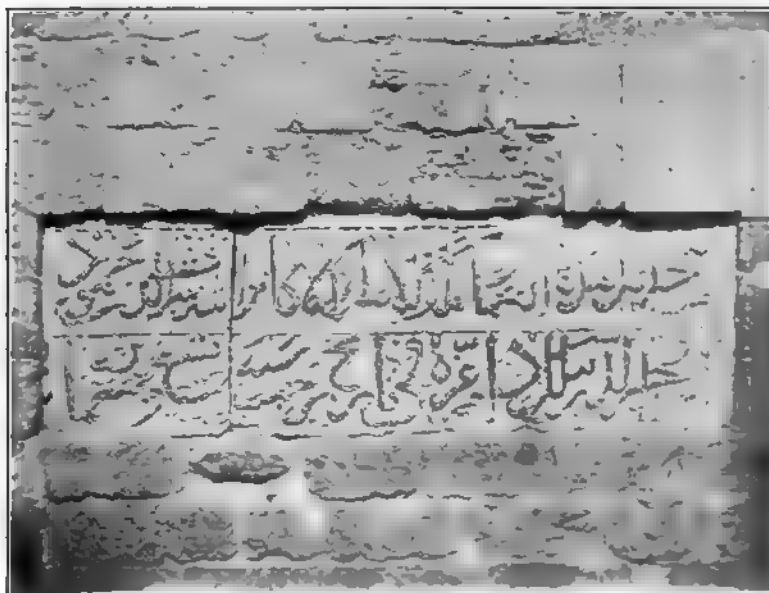
¹ See Le Strange, *op. cit.* p. 181.

² Thus attributed by Saint-Martin, *Nouv. Dict. géog. univ.* 1. 315, Paris, 1879, art. *Bakou*; by Durrieux and

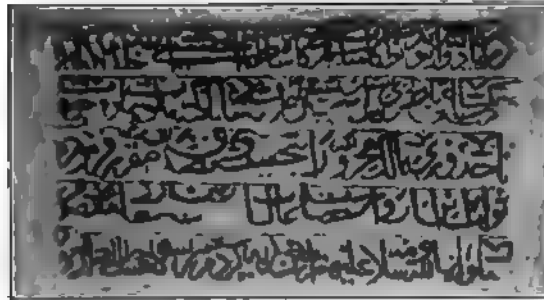
Fauvelle, *Samarkand*, p. 17, Paris, 1901; *Le Caucase et la Perse*, p. 137, Paris, 1885; and Shoemaker, *Heart of the Orient*, p. 87.



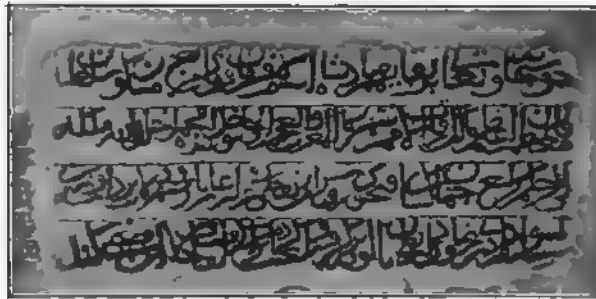
MOSQUE OF THE KHANS, BAKU



ARABIC INSCRIPTION A, RECORDING THE REBUILDING OF THE PALACE OF
THE KHANS AT BAKU IN 1709 A.D.



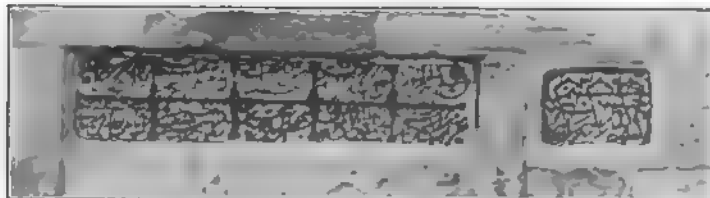
INSCRIPTION B, IN PERSIAN, UNDATED, BUT MENTIONING
TAHMASP (1524-1576 A.D.)



INSCRIPTION C, IN PERSIAN, UNDATED, BUT BELONGING TO
THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY A.D.



INSCRIPTION D, IN PERSIAN, DATED 1615 A.D.



PERSIAN (E) AND ARABIC (F) INSCRIPTIONS, THE LATTER DATED 1789 A.D.

I reproduce from photographs purchased in Baku, shows that a part of the buildings must have existed long before, as it speaks of the palace as having been 'renewed,' or 'rebuilt,' in the year 709 of the Hijra = 1309 A.D. Its two lines in Arabic read :—

'Prince Sharaf ad-Din Mahmud, King of Nobles and Grandees, and son of Fakhr ad-Din, the King—may his glory be everlasting—ordered the renewal of this Palace. Dated Rajab 709 (= December, 1309).'¹

The second of the inscriptions (*B*), five lines in Persian, is undated, but mentions Shah Tahmasp of Persia, who reigned 1524–1576 A.D., and begins with the words: 'In the days of Shah Tahmasp, of the family of Husain.'

The third inscription (*C*), four lines in Persian and likewise undated, adjoins the latter tablet, being on its right, and is written in a somewhat larger script. It belongs to the sixteenth century, in the time of Khudabandah, the father of Shah Abbas, for it contains a glorification of God for the long life of Shah Khudabandah Muhammad, who, we know, ruled 1578–1587.²

The fourth tablet (*D*), seven lines in Persian, belongs to the time of Shah Abbas, as it is dated 1024 A.H. (= 1615 A.D.).

The last tablet, or rather two tablets, contains two inscriptions—a longer one in Persian (*E*) over an arch, and by its side a small one (*F*), which gives in Arabic the regular formula of the Bismillah, 'In the name of God the Most Merciful and Compassionate,' and adds the date 1204 A.H. (= 1789 A.D.).

Within the grim enclosure of the citadel the Khans of Shirvan long held sway, and sombre tales are current of how they used to administer justice in days gone by. It is usually claimed that condemnation was speedily followed by consignment of the convicted unfortunate to a well—a true oubliette—which is said to have connected with the sea, so that the traces of the victims of their judgment were disposed of forever.

¹ My thanks are due to my colleague, Dr. Yohannan, for translating this and the other inscriptions.

² A modern hand has written the

Arabic date '1307' A.H. (= 1889 A.D.) over the words 'the country of Yazdagard' (*i.e.* Persia).

The Turks once used the palace as a magazine, and today it serves the Russians as an arsenal.

Of the two mosques within the citadel, one is in dilapidation, having doubtless suffered from the bombardment at the command of Peter the Great in 1723, if we may judge from the condition of the palace twenty-four years afterwards, according to Hanway's journal quoted above (p. 31). The other mosque is well preserved, and its elegant arabesque inscription and fine traceries on stone have all the beauty which the Persian art of arts in the delicate use of filigree texts can impart.¹ The inscription, in four lines of Arabic, gives the date of the building of the mosque in the reign of Bahadur Khan, and is dated 194 A.H. (= 809 A.D.). It reads as follows : —

‘During the reign of Shah Sultan Bahadur Khan, Emperor and son of an Emperor, King and son of a King — may God prolong his rule — in order to please God, it was agreed, in the second year, by the honorable chiefs, Muhammad Beg of Teheran, who is the head of the nobles, and Ali Talibi Khan, to build this Blessed Mosque according to the direction of God the Most High, in the year 194 A.H. (= 809 A.D.).’²

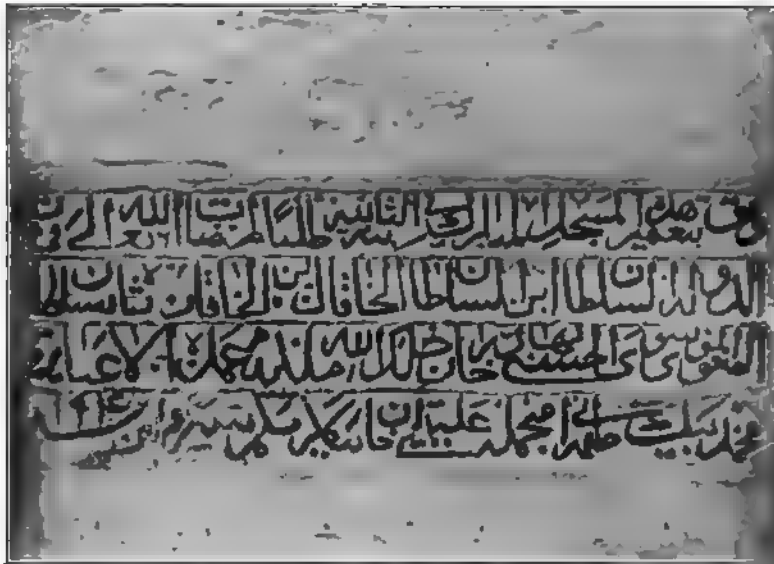
A few steps to the south of the citadel, as we retrace our way towards the quay, we pass beneath the height of a remarkable structure that looms nearly a hundred and fifty feet above us. This is the Kis-Kalah, or Maiden's Tower, as old as Byzantine times. Folk legend gathers about its ponderous bulk, and though the versions of the tale are many, it is always a phase of the same sad story of love that led to a maiden's tragic death from its towering heights. The story as I heard it was in the form of a Cenci horror : —

‘A brutal old Khan fell in love with his own daughter. She

¹ I saw the palace and the mosque several times from the outside, but was not in the courtyard itself, as it was too late to enter on the last afternoon of my visit ; so I have supplemented my notes by a couple of memoranda on the interior from

Brugsch, pp. 49-50; Orsolle, p. 138; and Shoemaker, pp. 86-87.

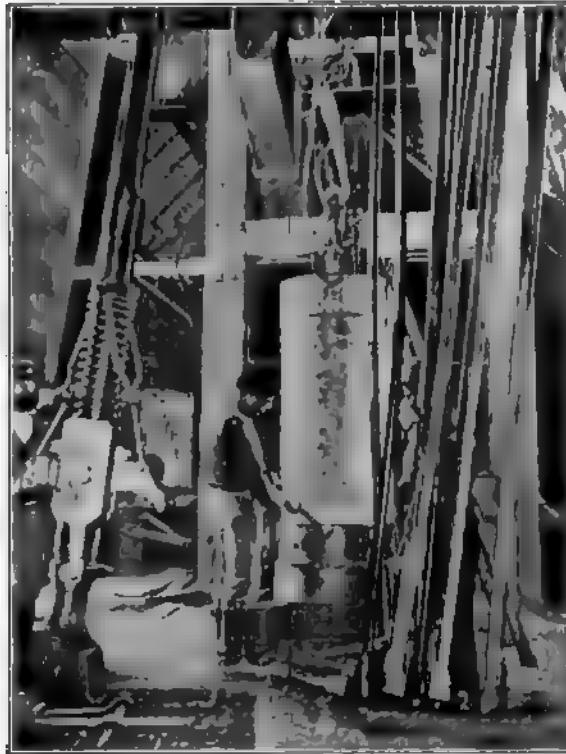
² My thanks are again due to Dr. Yohannan for deciphering the tablet from the photograph. For additional inscriptions see Dorn, *Mélanges asiatiques*, 4. 486-488.



ARABIC INSCRIPTION ON THE MOSQUE, BEARING THE DATE 194 A.H. = 809
A.D., IN THE REIGN OF BAHADUR KHAN



THE MAIDEN'S TOWER AT BAKU



THE BOILER AND MACHINERY OF A PETROLEUM WELL



THE OIL FIELD OF BALAKHANY, NEAR BAKU

naturally rejected his addresses, until, overwhelmed at last by his importunities, she promised to yield to his desire, provided that he would build her the loftiest tower in the land. On the day when the structure was completed, she flung herself headlong from the parapet into the sea, which at that time washed close to the wall.'

'An old fool and a pretty daughter !' — was my guide's terse comment when he concluded the tale. Other variants make slight changes in the elements, adding now the romance of a lover who sues the maiden for her hand, though it is pledged to another, or again the tragic complication of a father and son who are both in love with the beautiful damsel. The Cenci version seems to me as likely as any ;¹ at all events some tragedy seems to have been associated with the scene. The present position of the tower, standing back from the shore, bears witness to the fact, acknowledged by scientists, that the Caspian Sea was much higher in ancient times than it is now.² The tower itself has a practical use today, for it serves as a lighthouse for the harbor.

Some vestiges of walls of stone construction, emerging from the sea not far from where the tower stands, are thought to show traces of Arab architecture of the ninth or tenth century, and are doubtless the remains of a portion of the fortifications described two centuries ago, in the quotation given above from Hanway, as 'extended into the sea.'³

As we stand by the shore of the bay and look back once more over the new and the old town, our eye catches another scene, but one far different from the life and stir of the town. Far

¹ I have since found that the same general version is given by Dumas, *Impressions de voyage ; le Caucase*, 2. 18-20, Paris, 1880. There is no reason for assuming (as has been done, I believe) that the legend is due to any invention by Dumas.

² See, for example, Huntington, *The Pulse of Asia*, pp. 329-358, New

York, 1907 ; and id. *The Historic Fluctuations of the Caspian Sea*, in *Bulletin of the Amer. Geog. Soc.*, 39. 577-596, New York, 1907.

³ See Dumas, *op. cit.* 2. 42-43 ; Baedeker, *La Russie*, p. 397, Leipzig, 1902, and compare Hanway, *Caspian Sea*, 1. 378 ; 3 ed. 1. 261.

up on a hillside in the distance, back of the city, sleep the dead — the dead of historic and commercial Baku. There in the spacious unwallled plot of ground that is dedicated to their silent slumber, rest Musulmans, Armenians, Georgians, Jews, Russians, English — all in their turn alike, and all made one in death. Far from the turmoil of the city, of whose maddening throng they once formed a part, they repose now in peace. The elevated site of this abode of those who have gone before commands the fairest view in Baku, reaching over the city's busy quarters, over the blue bay beyond. Each morn as the sun sweeps up from the Caspian it touches the cemetery with its beams first, gilding now some stone chiseled in memory of one long dead (most likely a Moslem in creed), or lighting up the mound over some unnamed grave, but ever symbolizing by its radiance the breaking of that day when the Eternal Sunrise shall dawn.

CHAPTER IV

THE OIL-FIELDS AND THE FIRE-TEMPLE OF BAKU

‘By a town called Backo, more unto which town is a strange thing to behold — for there issueth out of the ground a marvellous quantity of oyle.’

—JEREMY DICKER. *Fit Voyage into Persia*, p. 439.

A VISIT to the oil wells at the fields in the Balakhany-Sabunchy-Romany region, about eight miles northward from Baku, or at Bibi Eibat, some three miles south of the city, is an interesting experience. It was my pleasant privilege, during my first visit at Baku, to pay such a visit under the guidance of the British vice-consul, Mr. Urquhart, whose kindness was equaled only by his knowledge of Baku and all that relates to the city.

On entering the fields, one becomes lost amid a maze of towering derricks, erected over the wells to operate them. These pyramidal wooden structures are covered with gypsolite or iron plating as a protection against fire. The shafts of the wells are often sunk fifteen hundred or two thousand feet to strike the oil.¹ Metal tubes, from six to twelve inches in diameter, are inserted in the bores so as to serve as pipes through which the precious liquid may spring upward or be drawn to the surface by a metallic bucket, the ‘bailer,’ ready to pass in iron conduits to the refinery in Black Town and become one of the richest articles of commerce.

There are over two thousand of these wells in the Apsheron (Ābsharān) Peninsula, on which Baku stands, and one can hardly conceive of the activity implied in this wilderness of

¹ A good idea of the difficulties connected with making these borings may be gained from Norman, *All the Russias*, pp. 219–227, New York, 1904.

truncated pyramids, each in itself a source of revenue that is a fortune.¹ The stupendous figures of the annual yield from these fields is almost staggering. It runs up into the many millions of 'poods,' a pood being approximately five American gallons.² Sometimes the borings strike 'fountains,' and then a tremendous 'spouter' is the result, belching up its concealed contents with the force of a geyser, and perhaps bringing ruin instead of fortune to its owner unless the giant can be speedily throttled and gagged. Thrilling descriptions are given of how some of these monsters have, within the last generation, thus wrought destruction to everything within immediate reach.³ The magnificence of the spectacle is surpassed only by the awful grandeur when fire adds terror to the scene. On all occasions when visiting the petroleum fields it is advisable to wear old clothes, for one may find it anything but the oil of gladness, as I learned from sad experience when one of the spouters blew off unexpectedly while we were near it, filling the air with a deluging rain from whose greasy downpour there was no escape.

All who have been at Baku, and almost all who have heard of Baku, know of the Fire Temple at Surakhany in the northern environs of the city. The place is easily reached

¹ See Henry, *Baku*, pp. vii, 104, and the remarkable statistics given throughout that standard work.

² Through the kindness of Mr. Wilson D. Youmans, of Yonkers, N. Y., I have been most courteously furnished, by the statistician of the Standard Oil Company of New York, with the following figures regarding Baku: 'During the year 1908 the production of the Baku Field was 465,343,000 poods, equaling 55,863,504 barrels of 42 gallons. The world's production of crude oil during the year 1908 was 284,614,022 barrels of 42 gallons, and the Baku production represented 19.6% of the total production of the world.'

'The production of the Baku Field annually since 1903 was as follows:—

1903	596,581,155 poods
1904	614,115,445 poods
1905	414,762,000 poods
1906	447,520,000 poods
1907	476,002,000 poods
1908	465,343,000 poods

'During the year 1908 the production of American crude oil was 179,572,479 barrels of 42 gallons. The United States government uses as a basis 8.33 poods of crude oil = one American barrel of 42 gallons. This is approximately 5 American gallons to 1 pood.'

³ See Henry, *Baku*, pp. 63-108.

by driving, or better by rail with a short spin in a phaeton afterwards. Common tradition has long associated the one-time sanctity of this region with the veneration of the so-called Zoroastrian Fire-worshippers, though whether with absolute justice must remain to be seen.

Zoroaster flourished at least as early as 600 B.C., and his religion became the faith of Ancient Iran, continuing as its creed until the seventh century of the Christian era. This remarkably pure religion, which bears striking resemblances to Judaism and to our own faith, which it antedates, was supplanted in the seventh century of our era by the new and militant creed of Islam. Ormazd yielded his throne in heaven to Allah, the Avesta gave place to the Kuran, and Zoroaster was superseded by Muhammad as the acknowledged prophet of truth. Having previously devoted a volume to the life and legend of Zoroaster and a monograph to his religion, as well as given special attention to the subject as a whole in my former book on Persia, I shall not now go further into the history and fortunes of the ancient creed.¹ Suffice it to say that a few Zoroastrians refused to adopt Muhammadanism when the conquest came (650 A.D.). Some of this scanty band sought refuge and freedom to worship Ormazd in India, where they became the ancestors of the flourishing community of the Parsis in Bombay; a remnant persisted in staying in their old home, only to meet with persecution and hatred as infidel *Gabrs*, 'Ghebers, Unbelievers,' and these still find an insecure asylum at Yazd and Kerman in the desert, while a handful even reside in Teheran.² They see not God but the purest effulgence of God in the Flame Divine, and they abhor the name of 'Fire-worshippers.' Yet in the eyes of Muhammadans they are such, and it is not strange that local tradition associates their name with Baku as the very source of eternal fire.

¹ See Jackson, *Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran*, New York, 1899; *Die iranische Religion*, in *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 612-708,

Strassburg, 1903-1904; *Persia Past and Present*, New York, 1906.

² See Jackson, *Persia*, pp. 353-400.

I have said that 'tradition' has connected the name of the Zoroastrians with the igneous realm of Baku, but I have not been able to trace it back more than two hundred years, as I shall show below, and I believe that some of the sweeping statements made on the subject by modern writers (including myself) may have to be modified so far as Zoroastrianism is concerned. The present shrine is apparently of Northern Indian rather than of Persian foundation, although possibly the site itself may have been a hallowed one in ancient times ; but before I turn to that matter, I shall give a description of the sanctuary and its surroundings.

The sacred precinct consists of a walled enclosure that forms nearly a parallelogram, following the points of the compass. Its length is about thirty-four yards from north to south, or forty on its longer side ; the breadth is about twenty-eight yards from east to west. The central shrine stands nearly in the middle of the court. A square-towered building, approached by a high flight of steps, rises toward the northeast corner. The walls of the precinct are very thick, as they consist of separate cells or cloistered chambers, running all the way around, and entered by arched doors. The whole is solidly built and covered with plaster.

The structure in the middle is a square fabric of brick, stone, and mortar, about twenty-five feet in height, twenty feet in length, and the same in width, with arched entrances on each side facing the points of the compass.¹ These entrances are approached by three steps each on the north and east sides, and by two steps on the south and west sides, where the ground is slightly higher. In the middle of the floor is a square well or hole (visible in my smaller photograph), measuring exactly forty and one-half inches (1 m. 13 cm.) in each direction. Evidences are seen of pipes once used to conduct the naphtha to this and to the roof. The top of the shrine is surmounted

¹ My measurements on the occasion of my last visit gave in meters, 6 m. 10 cm. × 6 m. 6 cm. or 20 ft. 0 in. × 19 ft. 11 in.

by four chimneys at the corners, from which the flaming gases used to rise when the temple was illumined in times gone by. In the middle of the roof is a square cupola, from whose eastern side there projects, like a flag, a three-pronged fork that resembles the *triśūla*, or trident, of the Indian god Śiva.

High over the archway on the eastward front is a double oblong tablet, three and a half feet high by two broad, the upper section of which shows a swastika emblem and a sun, four flowers, and several nondescript figures.¹ The lower section is devoted to an inscription in nine lines in the Nagari character of India, beginning *Sati Śrī Gaṇeśāya namaḥ*, 'In verity, Homage to the Honored Ganeśa'—the common invocation, in Sanskrit writings, to the divinity who removes obstacles. The inscription continues, apparently in the Marwar dialect of the Panjab,² stating that the shrine was built for Jvālā-ji (the same as the flame-faced goddess Jvālā-mukhi, of Kangra in the Panjab),³ and quoting a Sanskrit couplet on the merits of a pilgrimage and pious works. It concludes with the date of the Vikramaditya era, 'Samvat 1873' (=1816 A.D.).⁴ As

¹ These figures may represent a fire-altar, supposed to be behind a *triśūla*, and possibly a *chaitya*-bell over a *triśūla*. This is the view of Dr. Gray, Dr. Abbott, and myself. The exact measurements of the tablets in meters are: 1 m. 7 cm. high by 59 cm. broad, the upper section being 37 cm. in height, the lower 75 cm. in height.

² Such is the opinion of Pandit D. Kosambi, of Poona, India, to whom, as to Professor Lanman, Dr. Gray, and especially Dr. J. E. Abbott, I am indebted for suggestions and help in connection with the decipherment.

³ See Stewart (and Cust), *The Hindu Fire Temple at Baku*, in *Journ. Roy. As. Soc.* 1897, p. 311–318. Several references to *jvālāmukhī* in Sanskrit literature will be found in Böhtlingk and Roth, *Skt. Wb.* 3. 171–172.

⁴ There is some uncertainty in regard to the third cipher, whether 1 or 7. I have since found in Eichwald (*Reise auf dem Caspischen Meere*, 1. 217, Stuttgart, 1834) that in 1825 (or 1826) he saw and talked with the priest who, he says, had composed the inscription. So far as Eichwald could understand, the name of this recluse was 'Atteit Kanzenger,' from the city of 'Kotessur' (Kot Isa Shah, [Īśvara?] in the Panjab, N. India); that the temple had been erected '16' years previously, and the inscription on it began 'Sari Gnäss' (i.e. *Śrī Gaṇeśāya*), mentioning the name of the Indian ruler 'Bikker Mandit' (i.e. *Vikramāditya*) and likewise his own name. I cannot find the priest's name on the tablet, but Eichwald acknowledges the difficulty in understanding what he said.

the inscription is high and in a position not easy for photographing, it was necessary to perform the somewhat acrobatic feat of perching on the top of a long ladder that was shakily held in the air, about ten feet off, by six men. Considering the difficulties of the task, the photograph (the only legible one I have seen) turned out to be quite a success.

Around the walls of the precinct, either above or near the side of the doorways of the cells, are fifteen more dedicatory tablets sunk in the plaster and written, with one exception, in the same Nagari character, prevailingly used for Sanskrit, or in a variety of this Indian alphabet. In my note-book I gave them numbers, beginning at the northwest corner near the usual entrance. Two of them in the northern wall are in the Panjabi language and script of Upper India and are of Sikh origin, as they quote from the *Adi Granth*, the sacred book of Nanak's religion, which was founded about 1500 A.D. Their date, however, must be two centuries or more after that era, as was shown by Dr. Justin E. Abbott, of Bombay, from a couple of photographs of two other tablets in the southern wall, which I brought back after my first visit to the temple.¹ One of these latter inscriptions (XII — also published previously by Colonel C. E. Stewart in *JRAS.* 1897, pp. 311–318) is in Nagari and bears the date 'Samvat 1802' = 1745 A.D.; the other (XIII), immediately below it, is in Persian, the only one in that language, and gives the same year according to Muhammadan reckoning, Hijra '1158' = 1745 A.D.² I have since found similar dates on still others of the tablets within the precinct. For example, one of the tablets (I) near the west-by-north corner, beginning *Śrī Rāma sat*, contains the year 'Samvat 1770' = 1713 A.D., and seems to be the earliest date found. One of the northern tablets (IV) appears to have the date 'Samvat 1782' (?) = 1725 A.D., although the figures for 8

¹ Abbott, *Indian Inscriptions on the Fire Temple at Baku*, in *JAOS.* 29. 299–304, New Haven, 1908.

² For a rendering of the Persian tablet see below, p. 53, n. 2.



AN OIL SPOUTER BLOWING OFF



THE OIL FIELDS ABLAZE



INSCRIPTION ON THE SHRINE OF THE FIRE-TEMPLE, BAKU

and 2 are very uncertain. Another (XI), on the east side, bearing a swastika followed by *Om Śrī Gaṇeśāya namaḥ*, has at the end (though almost illegible) 'Sam(v)at 1820' = 1763. Yet another (IX), also on the eastern wall, concludes, 'Samvat 1839' = 1782 A.D. (the last cipher being slightly broken); while still another (V), on the northern side, closes, as I read it, with '1840' = 1783 A.D.¹ They all belong, therefore, to the eighteenth century.

Besides the total of fifteen inscriptions, dated or undated, within the circumvallation, there are two more on the outside, connected with the square tower near the northeast corner. The lower one of these (XVI) is inscribed on a black stone over the arch, facing east; it begins with the common Ganesh formula, mentions Jvala-Ji, the divinity of fire, and concludes with the date 'Samvat 1866' = 1809 A.D. The upper one (XVII), placed on the outside of the story above, is likewise in Nagari, but is less clearly written, and the close is hardly legible in my photograph, which was taken with difficulty, as I had to be held up over the top of the high doorway while I made the snapshot. The tablet has been stupidly set in, or reset, upside down, and below it is scrawled in Russian block letters the name 'N. Mintova.'

As I secured photographs of all the inscriptions, and the majority were successful, in case the tablet photographed was still legible,² it will be possible to study them in greater detail later, and I hope to publish them elsewhere in co-operation with Dr. Abbott, whose interest in the subject has already been proved.³

¹ Of this latter tablet I have two photographs.

² Inscription X (small) on the east side was wholly illegible, but I photographed it also. As most of the tablets are of cement, and the letters raised, they are peculiarly vulnerable to the attacks of the elements.

³ I did not know until after my last

visit to Baku that copies of the inscriptions had been drawn in 1860-1861 by Dorn, *Atlas einer Reise im Kaukasus*, St. Petersburg, 1871, reissued in 1895 by the press of the Royal Academy of St. Petersburg, in Russian, and also in German as *Atlas zu Bemerkungen einer Reise in dem Kaukasus und den südlichen Küstenländern des*

After this long, and, I fear, somewhat technical, disquisition, I turn to the more attractive problem of determining the possible age of the temple and its buildings. I may state at once that I used to hold the generally current opinion that the sanctuary was of Gabr, or Parsi, origin—a Zoroastrian fire-temple.¹ Further study of the subject has forced me to abandon this view (certainly for the present temple) as the following paragraphs will show.

So far as my researches go, I have not been able to find any allusion to a temple on the site in the classic writers of Greece and Rome;² nor in the early Armenian authors;³ nor do the medieval Arab-Persian geographers refer to it, as we might

Kaspischen Meeres in den Jahren 1860–1861, St. Petersburg, 1905. I have worked throughout from photographs and personal inspection of the tablets, having secured Dorn's work only after this chapter was set up.

¹ See Jackson, *Notes of a Journey to Persia*, I, in *JAOS.* 25. 176–178.

² The Byzantine writer Priscus (d. after 471 A.D.) incidentally refers to the region of the naphtha wells of Baku, but not the temple, in an allusion to 'the flame that comes out of the rock beneath the sea' (τὴν ἐκ τῆς ὑφάλου πέτρας ἀναφερομένην φλόγα) in *Frag.* 8 (ed. C. Müller, *FHG.* 4. 90 b, and ed. Dindorf, I. 313). The statement by Henry, *Baku*, I. 25, who cites Gibbon (ch. 46) as his authority, to the effect that the Roman emperor Heraclius appears to have destroyed the temple at Baku along with others, is due to a misconception. The temple which Heraclius destroyed was at Shiz (now Takht-i Sulaiman), and was not the sanctuary at Baku; see Jackson, *Persia*, pp. 141–142.

³ One might be inclined to see a reference to Baku in the allusion by the Armenian writer, Moses Khorene

(5th century or later), to a fire altar in Bagavan that was fostered by the Sasanian king Ardashir. The reference (*Mos. Khor.* 2. 77) reads in the German translation by Lauer, *Geschichte Gross-Armeniens*, p. 136, Regensburg, 1869, 'Auch vermehrt er [d. h. Artaschir] noch den Tempeldienst und befiehlt, das Feuer des Ormist, welches auf dem Altar in Bagavan war, ohne erlöschen leuchten zu lassen.' The modern Armenian author Alishan (*Hin Havatk gam Hetanosagan gronk Hayots* [i.e. *Ancient Beliefs, or Pagan Religions of Armenia*], pp. 50–51, 302, 432, Venice, 1895) understands the passage as meaning Baku; but both the German authorities, Hübschmann (*Altarmenische Ortsnamen*, in *Indogermanische Forschungen*, 16. 411) and Marquart (*Ērānsāhr*, p. 110, n. 2), seem to allow of no question that Bagavan (Bagvan) is a small village, now Turkish Uich-Kilise, near Diadin and Mount Npat (Ala-dagh), north-north-east of Lake Van, a hundred miles from Baku. So that idea (otherwise attractive) may be dismissed as misleading.



THE FIRE-TEMPLE AND ITS PRECINCT AT SURAKHANY, BAKU

expect, when mentioning the naphtha wells; nor again is it spoken of by the European travelers Barbaro, Jenkinson, or Duckett in the sixteenth century, nor by Olearius in the seventeenth century, nor by John Bell early in the eighteenth, when touching on Baku, nor yet, earliest of all, by Marco Polo — all of whom have been cited above. The oldest reference I have been able thus far to discover (though I stand ready for correction) is by Jonas Hanway in the year 1747, who was practically contemporaneous with the inscriptions given above. Hanway himself did not visit the temple when he was in Baku, but he gives a detailed and accurate account of it, based upon 'the current testimony of many who did see it.' He speaks of the worshipers as 'Indians,' 'Gauris,' or 'Gebrs,' and devotes a chapter to describing the religion of Zoroaster, somewhat in detail.¹ The heading of this chapter reads: —

'A succinct account of the antient PERSIAN religion, with several minute particulars relating to the everlasting fire near BAKU, and the extraordinary effects of this phænomenon, to which the INDIANS pay divine honours.'

¹ Hanway, *Caspian Sea*, bk. 3, ch. 57, 1. 379–384 = 3 ed. 1. 261–265. I repeat again that in general the description of the temple precinct is accurate, as based on trustworthy information. Not all that is said about Zoroaster, however, would be accepted today. As already stated (p. 32, n. 1, above), Dr. John Cooke, *Travels*, 2. 382, impugned Hanway's statements, on the ground of misrepresentation; he declares that he will not abuse his readers' patience by an account of Zoroaster and his successors, nor imitate Hanway in the description which he had given of different vaulted temples 'from 10 to 15 feet high, which do not now exist and which probably never existed' [this latter criticism is unjust, as Hanway simply refers to the cells]; nor will he describe the horizontal gap in the rock from which

a flame issues; but he will confine himself to the facts of his visit to the celebrated fire. I cite his remarks from the footnote of the French translation of George Forster, *Voyage du Bengale à St. Pétersbourg*, tr. L. Langlès, 2. 357–358, Paris, 1802, as Cooke's English original is not accessible to me. The French runs: 'Le 11 février 1747, notre ambassadeur, avec plusieurs personnes de sa suite, alla voir ce feu célèbre. Après être descendus des montagnes dans la plaine située au nord de ces mêmes montagnes, à cinq ou six verstes au plus de Bâkoù, ils entrèrent dans un petit fossé carré bâti en pierres, dont l'aire avoit à peine un demi-acre, mesure d'Ecosse. Le sol étoit composé d'un sable pur et léger; dans cette enceinte étoit un puits. La surface de l'eau qui sortoit de cette source étoit couverte de

After giving some idea of Zoroaster and his doctrines as followed by the early Persians, he adds :—

‘These opinions, with a few alterations, are still maintained by some of the posterity of the antient INDIANS and PERSIANS, who are called GEBERS, or GAURS, and are very zealous in preserving the religion of their ancestors ; particularly in regard to their veneration for the element of fire. What they commonly call the EVERLASTING FIRE, near BAKU, before which these people offer their supplications, is a phænomenon of a very extraordinary nature, in some measure peculiar to this country, and therefore deserves description. This object of devotion to the GEBERS, lies about 10 ENGLISH miles north-east by east from the city of BAKU, on dry rocky land. There are several antient temples built with stone, supposed to have been all dedicated to fire ; most of them are arched vaults, not above 10 to 15 feet high. Amongst others there is a little temple, in which the INDIANS now worship : near the altar, about 3 feet high, is a large hollow cane, from the end of which issues a blue flame, in colour and gentleness not unlike a lamp that burns with spirits, but seemingly more pure. These INDIANS affirm, that this flame has continued ever since the flood, and they believe it will last to the end of the world ; that if it was resisted or suppressed in that place, it would rise in some other. Here are generally forty or fifty of these poor devotees, who come on a pilgrimage from their own country, and subsist upon wild sallary, and a kind of JERUSALEM artichokes, which are very good food, with other herbs and roots, found a little to the northward. Their business is to make expiation, not for their own sins only, but for those of others, and they continue the longer time, in proportion to the

naphthe blanc ; mais quelques pouces plus bas que la surface générale de l'aire du sable. Notre compagnie ne vit qu'une seule misérable [1.358] salle, où l'on dit que ces merveilleux édifices se voient, et un autre appartement fort mesquin, où demeurent les religieux. Ils n'étoient pas alors plus de 40. Ils introduisirent très-volontiers nos messieurs dans la chambre dont je viens de parler. Il y avoit une place séparée, comme nos chœurs dans les temples protestans, et que vous pouvez nommer leur autel, comme fait Hanway : quelques cannes creuses étoient plantées dans ce sable pur. Une de ces cannes, plus grande et plus grosse

que les autres, étoit placée au milieu, par manière de prééminence. D'autres cannes étoient très-pressées autour de celle-là, de manière à former trois ouvertures au sommet, pour livrer passage à trois flammes bleues-pâles. A l'époque dont je parle, plusieurs de ces cannes étoient éteintes. Mais afin que l'ambassadeur et sa compagnie pussent voir l'effet que ces cannes produisoient quand elles étoient en activité, on apporta un vase rempli de naphthe pur ; on en mit un peu sur le sable à l'entour des roseaux, et par le moyen d'un morceau de papier allumé, le naphthe exhala de la flamme à travers les roseaux.'

number of persons for whom they have engaged to pray. They mark their foreheads with saffron, and have a great veneration for a red cow. They wear very little cloathing, and those who are of the most distinguished piety, put one of their arms upon their head, or some other part of the body, in a fixed position, and keep it unalterably in that attitude. A little way from the temple is a low clift of a rock, in which there is a horizontal gap, 2 feet from the ground, near 6 long and about 3 feet broad, out of which issues a constant flame, of the colour and nature I have [p. 382] already described: when the wind blows, it rises sometimes 8 feet high, but much lower in still weather: they do not perceive that the flame makes any impression on the rock. This also the INDIANS worship, and say it cannot be resisted but it will rise in some other place. About 20 yards on the back of this clift is a well cut in a rock 12 or 14 fathom deep, with exceeding good water.'¹

The descriptive portion of this account, as already stated, is correct, being based upon information received from accurate observers. It is plain from the description itself that, if actual Gabrs (*i.e.* Zoroastrians, or Parsis) were among the number of the worshipers at the shrine, they must have kept in the background, crowded out by Hindus, because the typical features which Hanway mentions are distinctly Indian, not Zoroastrian. The allusion to the *tilak* mark on the forehead, the veneration paid to the red cow, the diet of herbs and fruits, the scantiness of clothing, and the Yogi posture of the *ūrdhva-bāhu* ascetics, with withered arms, are all Brahmanical.

Further external evidence of the same character may be gained from the testimony of succeeding travelers. Thus, S. G. Gmelin (1771) describes the various Yogi practices of the devotees, especially of one ascetic who had held his arm up for seven years, until it became stiffened — a species of self-castigation that is only Hindu and was never sanctioned by Zoroastrianism.² Similarly, Jacob Reineggs, who made several journeys in the Caucasus before 1796, in describing the 'Ateschjah,'

¹ Hanway, *Caspian Sea*, 1. 381–382 = 3 ed. 1. 201–265.

² The reference to S. G. Gmelin, *Reise*, 3. 46, is taken from Eichwald,

Reise auf dem Caspischen Meere, 1. 178–179, n., Stuttgart, 1834, as I have not been able to obtain Gmelin's own work.

speaks of the devotees as 'Indianer,' who were formerly called 'Geber'; and he mentions their Yogi austerities, noting also that they burned their dead — a fact sufficient in itself to prove they could not have been true Zoroastrians.¹ Pointing in a like direction is an incidental reference by Morier (between 1800 and 1816), when he casually mentions meeting a 'Hindu pilgrim' returning from Baku to Benares.²

The scholar Eichwald (1825–1826), who gives a clear description of the temple and some of the ceremonies, mentions the names of Hindu divinities as invoked in the worship — Rama ('Rahma'), Krishna ('Krisehni'), Hanuman ('Hanuma'), and Agni ('Aghan'), the god of fire — all of which are Brahmanical, as is likewise the blowing on the conch shell ('Tritonmuschel') in the ritual. His picture of the temple, with its naked worshipers (here reproduced), his reference to the Kangra temple in India, and above all, his mention of a place in the cloister where the devotees burn the body of any of their number that may die, leave no doubt as to the Hindu character of the shrine at that day. He himself (pp. 216–217) properly emphasizes the fact that the Indian fire-worshipers at the temple had wrongly been called Gabrs ('Gueber').³

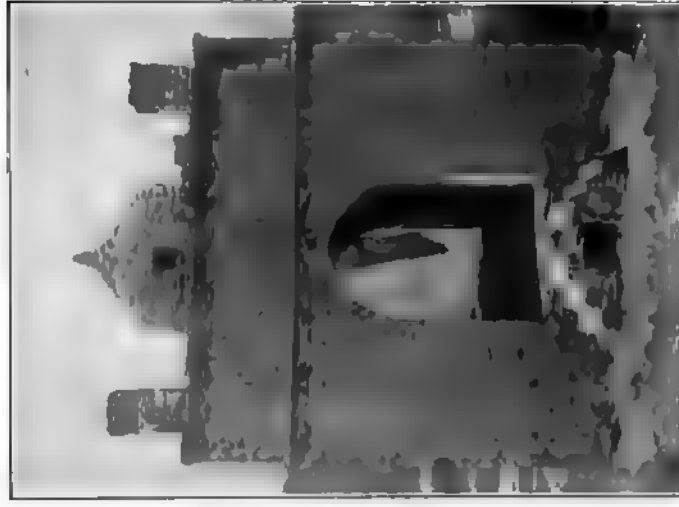
The German poet and student Friedrich Bodenstedt, writing in 1847, after spending seven years in Russia and the Caucasus, in telling of the 'Atesch-gah,' speaks of the Hindu god Vishnu ('Wischnu') and of the ritual summons with the 'Tritonmuschel,' and looks upon the idolatrous worship and barbarous self-mortification of the body as if it were a deca-

¹ See Reineggs, *Allgemeine Beschreibung des Kaukasus*, ed. F. E. Schröder, 1. 159, Gotha, 1796.

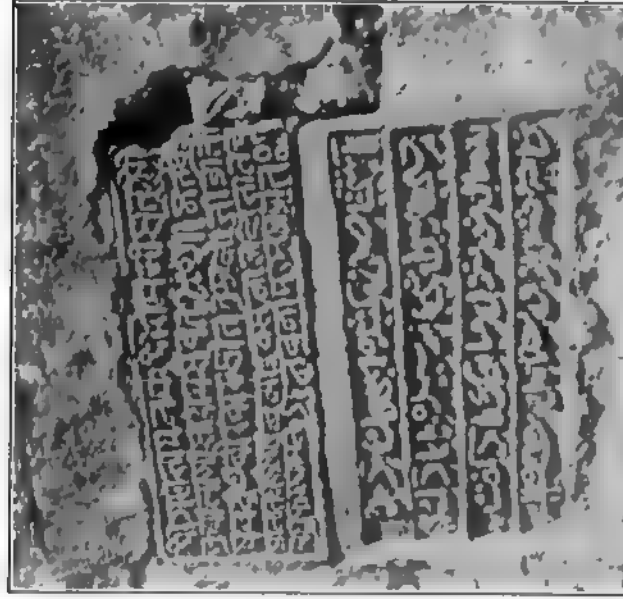
² Morier, *Second Journey through Persia*, 2. 243, London, 1818.

³ See Eichwald, *Reise auf den Caspischen Meere und in den Caucasus*, 1. 176–183, 189, 216–217, Stuttgart, 1834. The only possible Zoroastrian

feature in the whole description is the employment of the old name 'Atesch-gah' (fire-temple) and the allusion (p. 181) to the hatred manifested towards mice, frogs, lizards, and snakes, 'als Kinder des bösen Geistes,' although this information may have been derived from some other source, and applied in this connection.



THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY, EASTERN ELEVATION,
WITH INSCRIPTION



INSCRIPTIONS XII AND XIII ON THE WALLS OF THE PRECINCT



THE PORTAL AND TOWERED EDIFICE IN THE EASTERN WALL, FIRE-
TEMPLE OF BAKU



WORSHIPERS IN THE BAKU TEMPLE IN 1865

dence from the exalted religion of Zoroaster ('die erhabene Lehre Zerduscht's'), whereas it was really only Indian.¹

In November, 1858, the noted French writer Alexandre Dumas visited the temple. Throughout his description he assumes that the sanctuary was a fane of the Zoroastrian fire-worshippers; and he refers to its ministrants as 'Parsis,' 'Guèbres,' and 'Madjous,' or descendants of the Magi. But it is clear from his description of the ritual, which he himself calls 'une messe hindoue,' together with his allusion to the frequent recurrence of the divine name 'Brahma' in the chant, the employment of cymbals, and the use of prostrations in the service, that the worship was simply Hindu.²

Petzholdt (1863-1864) gives an almost equally detailed description of the sanctuary and the 'Hocus-pocus' ceremonies that were performed, but has nothing to show that there was anything Zoroastrian in their nature.³

About the same time as Petzholdt, the Englishman Ussher visited the temple, on Sept. 19, 1863 (or 1864?), calling it 'Atesh Dja,' the Arabic pronunciation of the Parsi name *Ātash Gāh*.⁴ His diary notes were not originally prepared for publication, and he disclaims for his volume any pretence to special scientific acumen; but while he supposes that the pilgrims to the temple were 'devotees from among the fire worshipers of Persia and India' (p. 207), and even though he mentions Zoroaster and the god Ormazd, his testimony, like that of his predecessors, to the effect that the steps of the little altar in the priest's cell were 'covered with brass and bronze images' (p. 208), bears on the face of it the evidence

¹ See Bodenstein, *Die Völker des Kaukasus*, pp. 137-139, 2 ed. Frankfurt on Main, 1849 (preface dated Lago di Como, 1 Nov. 1847).

² Dumas (père), *Impressions de voyage: le Caucase*, 2. 25-30, Paris, 1880.

³ Petzholdt, *Der Kaukasus. Stu-*

dien in den Jahren 1863 und 1864, 1. 207-210, Leipzig, 1866.

⁴ Ussher, *A Journey from London to Persepolis*, pp. 206-207, London, 1865. It may be added that a not very accurate small woodcut of the temple is found in Bicknell's *Hafiz*, p. 337, London, 1875.

that the ministrant was a Hindu. His own words, in fact, state this when he appends: 'The present inhabitants were only two in number, both from India, one being a native of Calcutta, the other of Delhi. . . . They wore the usual Indian dress and turban, having in addition a streak of yellow paint on the forehead between the eyes.' These priests are pictured in the colored frontispiece to his book as engaged in performing their ritual on the pedestal of stone and mortar which is near the central shrine, and which, like it, is represented as lighted up with natural gas; their type is thoroughly Indian, and the ceremonies which are described are Brahmanical, not Zoroastrian.

Ten years later than Ussher, the German Baron Thielmann visited the fire-temple in October, 1872.¹ He calls it by the same name, 'Ateschgah,' and says (p. 10): 'The priest is sent here for a limited time by the Parsee community of Bombay;² after a lapse of some years he is replaced. Now and then a pilgrim from the end of Persia (Yazd, Kerman) or from India makes his appearance and remains for several months or years at the sacred place.' Proceeding on this assumption, the baron supposed that the worship was that offered to Ahura Mazda, or Ormazd; but it is manifest that the ritual which he witnessed and briefly described, especially the finale of 'a votive offering of sugar-candy made to an idol on the altar,' was wholly Hindu, never Parsi. Thielmann's further testimony (gathered through

¹ Thielmann, *Journey in the Caucasus*, Eng. tr. by Heneage, 2. 9-12, London, 1875. Mounsey (*Journey through the Caucasus*, p. 329, London, 1872), who was in Baku July 18-19, 1871, writes of the temple as if of Zoroastrian origin, but speaks equally of the priest as a 'Dervish from Delhi.'

² I have not been able to find any record of such missions in Patell's *Parsi Prakash*, Bombay, 1888. Nor do I know on what authority Orsolle (*Le*

Caucase, p. 141, Paris, 1885) states that after the chief priest was assassinated in 1864 the Parsis of Bombay sent another, who was gradually forgotten and withdrew in 1880, although the latter date is about correct; cf. pp. 54, 56, below. Orsolle presumes throughout (pp. 140-141) that the temple was Zoroastrian, and refers to the profanation of the sacred fire in burning the bodies of the priests that died in service.

an interpreter), to the effect that 'the priest, according to his own statement, was ignorant of Zend and also of Sanscrit' (p. 311), would militate against the celebrant's having been a Zoroastrian dastur, who would surely have known the Avesta. As regards the statement that 'he understood Hindoostani, Hindi, and presumably also Parsee,' we may readily believe the first part, though the assumption as to the Parsi dialect is far less probable; and we may well agree with Stewart (p. 314, cited below) that Thielmann was mistaken.¹

Still more strong in favor of the Hindu, not Zoroastrian, character of the present sanctuary is the internal evidence of the inscriptions which have been mentioned already. The first to draw my attention to this fact was the Parsi priest Shams Ul-Ulama Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, of Bombay. In a letter written to me in 1904, after my first visit, and from which I quoted later in print (*JAOS.* 25. 304), he expressed his doubts, from the Zoroastrian standpoint. These doubts (which had been anticipated long before by Eichwald — see above, p. 50) were further strengthened by Dr. Abbott's reading of three of the inscriptions, as already mentioned; and they are now wholly substantiated by the other inscriptions, here made accessible. They are all Indian, with the single exception of one written in Persian (see my reproduction), which is dated in the same year as the Hindu tablet over it, as explained above. The Iranian tablet is a quatrain in not very good Persian, the mistakes of which might have been made by a Hindu imperfectly acquainted with the language, although Persian is current in northern India.²

¹ O'Donovan (*Merv Oasis*, 1. 37–39), who visited the fire-temple in 1879, speaks of it as 'of ante-Mussulman days' and mentions 'Guebre worship.' Furthermore, an article 'by a visitor,' entitled 'An Ancient Zoroastrian Fire-Temple at Baku,' in the magazine *Men and Women of India*, vol. 1, no. 12, p. 695 (Bombay, Dec. 1898), presumes

throughout that the sanctuary was 'Parsi' and says that 'thirty years ago . . . the last Zoroastrian attendant disappeared.' A photograph of the shrine is given.

² The four lines of the Persian tablet (XIII), whose last line is metrically imperfect, are in praise of fire, and read: 'A fire has been drawn up like

Not only this evidence, but also the theory of the Indian origin of the shrine at Baku, was anticipated over a decade ago by Colonel Stewart in an interesting article entitled an 'Account of the Hindu Fire Temple at Baku,' which was published, with a reproduction of three of the tablets, in 1897. Stewart had visited the place in 1866 and again in 1881, and he adds convincing evidence to show that the sanctuary is Northern Indian in source. He speaks of 'Hindu visitors who came here after visiting the Temple of Jawála Mukhi in the Kangra District of the Punjab. The Kangra Temple of the Flame-faced Goddess is well known in India.'¹ He further states (pp. 311-312) that, when he saw it 'in 1866, one Hindu priest alone watched the fire, although previously three Hindu priests had always watched.' One of these had been murdered by the Muhammadans for his pittance of money; the other had fled. The third, who remained, spoke Panjabi, the language of at least two of the inscriptions, and had piously served at Surakhany for many years as priest of 'this greater Jawála Ji,' as he called the divinity of flame, a name that appears several times in the inscriptions mentioned above, and that of course is connected with the Indian temple at Kangra. Colonel Stewart adds that when he returned to Baku in 1881 and again visited the temple, he found the fire extinguished and no priest in attendance. He furthermore states (p. 314) that near the Afghan border he met two Hindu Fakirs who announced themselves as 'on a pilgrimage to this Baku Jawála Ji'; and that in 1882, when he was returning to England, some of the Hindu traders begged to be allowed to accompany him as far as Baku

the array of a mountain, | Who can reach up to its crest? | "May the New Year of the abode be blessed" — he said | The house has become radiant (? lit. light-spear) from it.'

¹ See Stewart, *JRAS.* 1897, p. 311, and cf. Cust, *ibid.* pp. 315-318. Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, p. 315-316, London, 1876,

describes two temples at Kata Kangra, a larger and a smaller one, after Cunningham, *Archaeological Reports*, 5. 178 ff., but neither the description nor the woodcut (from a photograph, p. 316) are sufficiently comprehensive to give a fair idea whether there be a resemblance in style between these two and the Baku temple.



SCENE AT THE FIRE-TEMPLE OF BAKU IN 1825

for the purpose of visiting the shrine. He supplements this by saying, 'although the Hindus I have met in Persia know about this temple, I never heard any Zoroastrian in Persia, although I met many, express any wish to visit it or have any knowledge of its existence.' His conclusion on this point is (p. 313), 'there can be no doubt this temple is not, or never can have been a Zoroastrian temple.' The structure in the middle of the sacred enclosure he regards (p. 312, cf. p. 315) as 'a much more modern building,' and he considers it to have been 'dedicated to the God Siva, as shown by Siva's iron trident, which was fastened on the roof.'¹ It was, however, dedicated to some form of the Hindu divinity of fire, as we have seen.

Additional weight from the Hindu side is given by the style of architecture of the building. Judged from this standpoint also, irrespective of anything else, the structure appears to be Indian rather than Persian. Heinrich Brugsch, who spent part of a day at the sanctuary, about 1884, but says little about it, noticed that the edifice was built in Indian style ('in seinem indischen Baustyl'),² and it gives an impression similar to that of a Hindu *Dharmaśālā*, or religious building founded as an act of piety or charity. Stewart accordingly speaks several times of the whole sanctuary as a 'Dharamsálá' (p. 313), and remarks that it did not resemble the remains of any real

¹ Stewart subsequently (p. 315) changes his phrase 'much more modern' to 'probably more modern,' in speaking of the central structure. The inscription on its front now proves it to be younger than the surrounding walls with their inscribed cells. Eichwald (pp. 182-183) implies that it did not exist in Gmelin's time (Gmelin, *Reise*, 3. 45), but the latter work is not accessible to me for reference. Stewart's further statement (p. 312), that this middle building 'did not contain the fire,' must be understood to refer

to the especial occasion of his visit, because the pipes for the naphtha still remain in the flooring and on the roof. The account by Ussher, p. 207, moreover, shows that gas burned from the hole in the central edifice, and the frontispiece to his book shows the flame there as well as blazing from the roof.

² Brugsch, *Im Lande der Sonne*, 2 ed. p. 55, Berlin, 1886. Orsolle (*Le Caucase*, p. 140) uses the same phrase, 'dans le style indien,' yet see above, p. 52, n. 2, end.

Zoroastrian temple he had seen in Persia. I think we may readily share his opinion, even if the architecture of the Persian *chāpār-khānah*, or caravansarai, may possibly have exercised some slight influence on the style of the enclosure, and even though one might be inclined to see remote affinities with the ruined shrine near Isfahan and that near Abarkuh.¹

From all this I believe that, even against our will, we must reach the conclusion that, whatever the site may possibly have been originally, the Baku fire-temple, as we now have it, is a Hindu product, and that it is, more particularly, of Northern Indian origin, where fire-worship was cultivated from the ancient time of the Vedas. In age the sanctuary can hardly be more than two centuries old, if we may judge from the half dozen inscriptions that are dated, as they belong mostly to the eighteenth century.² We may account for its presence at Baku more easily from the fact that 'formerly many merchants lived here, especially Indians,' as is stated by Hanway (or rather by Cooke's diary) in 1747; and Eichwald (1825-1826) states that in his time the special patron of the temple was a rich Hindu, named 'Otumdshen' (perhaps Skt. Atmajanma), who farmed the Caspian fisheries and lived mostly at Astrakhan.³ I have already (p. 31) mentioned the fact that caravans from India were common in the region from early times.

Thus, to our regret, vanishes the legend of the 'Zoroastrian' Atashgah at Baku, at least in the form in which we have it. The sacred flame that was its source has likewise vanished, for in 1879 the temple passed over into Russian hands by a concession of the government, when the last priest sold out his interests to the Baku Oil Company near the old Kokorev refinery, and the fire was extinguished forever.⁴ It is true that

¹ Jackson, *Persia*, pp. 254, 342. For a memorandum of the style of the Indian temple at Kangra, see above, p. 54, n. 1.

² So also Abbott, *JAOS.* 29. 303.

³ Hanway, *Caspian Sea*, 1. 377 =

3 ed. 1. 260; Eichwald, *Reise*, 1. 183, 217.

⁴ See Cust in the article by Stewart, *JRAS.* 1879, p. 315, and compare Henry, *Baku*, p. 25.

photographers may still have the fane illuminated on occasions so as to give a more characteristic picture, or may paint into their plates the blazing naphtha for more realistic effect; but even in 1881, when Stewart last visited the shrine, it was under lock and key as now, and the engineer in charge of the Russian refinery 'relit' the fire, only to extinguish it when he left the building, because, as he said, 'he wanted all the natural petroleum gas for heating the furnaces of his works' (p. 312). *Sic transit gloria ignis!*—the flame has perished, a victim to the commercial value of the precious substance that gave it birth.

And one thing more. By a strange chance, the bell which once hung aloft from a hook that is still visible in the roof, and which was rung to mark the progress of the pagan ritual, now swings in the belfry of a Russian church which was in need of a signal to summon its worshipers to Sunday service.

CHAPTER V

OFF TO DERBENT

‘Behold, thy walls are continually before me.’

— *Isaiah* 49. 16.

‘Two tickets for Derbent, first class, please’ — *pervavo klassa, pozhaluista* — said my guide to the ticket-agent at Baku, late one night on the occasion of my fourth visit to that city; and before many minutes had passed I was off to make researches in the ancient-modern town of Derbent, or Derbend, on the Caspian, a night’s ride by train.¹

To many, I suppose, it would hardly occur to take this trip for antiquarian studies, since Derbent is seldom visited by travelers; yet I felt a lively interest in the prospective excursion, for I had reason to hope that I might find something new (or, rather, old) that might add to the existing fund of knowledge, since I knew there were historic walls on both sides of the town, dating back at least fourteen hundred years to the Sasanian Empire of Persia, and perhaps even to the time of Alexander the Great. It is hope such as this that lends special life to what might otherwise be dry-as-dust investigations, and when results are realized, the enjoyment is doubly keen.

My interpreter on the trip was an interesting character, a Russified German, who reveled in the experiences of his checkered career, and talked about them with a frankness that was refreshing. In his ups and downs in life he had crossed the ocean several times, and was familiar with America, where he had served in various capacities, from that of steamer purser

¹ I missed my fellow-traveler, the *Westward*, which has since won unmatched laurels for America in English and German waters. A. S. C., on this occasion (1910), as he was at Southampton with his yacht,



VIEW OF DERWENT IN 1860



THE MODERN PORTION OF DERBENT, FACING ON THE CASPIAN

to bartender, street cleaner, bootblack, and tramp — always seeking novelty. After leaving New York, he had passed through the eleven months' siege of Port Arthur at the time of the Russo-Japanese War, had faced death many times, and had been reported dead, but had bobbed up serenely once more, and was now worthily engaged in legitimate business with a reputable firm in Baku. I met him by chance, and he consented to take a couple of days off from business so as to serve me in the office of dragoman, being greatly taken at the idea of playing a new rôle — that of aiding in the cause of archaeological science. 'From tramp to professor's assistant,' was his jocular comment when we struck a bargain. His good nature and unfailing humor made him a capital attendant, and the varied lot of his fortune, or lack of fortune, rendered him most valuable to me in money matters, for he constantly curbed my tendency to be overlavish in distributing rubles and kopeks. His merry talk cheered the hours when we were awake on the train, and by daylight we had reached Derbent. I took care at once to have my official documents shown to the gendarme at the station, so as not to be disturbed or called to account when mousing about the city, where few Americans have been.

Derbent is full of romance when one knows its history, and even amid the mist that hung over it I could catch glimpses of the glamor of the past. Its mighty walls are documents in stone from by-gone ages and have solemn stories to tell of the billows of war that have surged in blood below their towering bastions. With giant embrace they run in two parallel lines from the citadel that crowns the height above the town, down to the very edge of the sea, while in the opposite direction a single rampart thrusts its way back to the west for thirty or forty miles through the Caucasus, with sporadic traces, it is thought, as far as the Black Sea.¹ This huge rampart was the famous wall of 'Gog and Magog,' which Alexander built, according to legend, to shut

¹ See above, p. 19, and compare *kasus*, p. 216, Leipzig, 1888, reproduced on p. 63.

out the invading hordes that came around the Caspian from the north. These were the ravaging bands variously known as Scythians, Huns, Alans, Turks, or Khazars. It is no marvel that ages of service have made the walls and their armored breastplate of stone look battered and worn.

The range of the Caucasus itself forms a natural bulwark across the country between the Black and the Caspian seas; and through it there are only two famous openings which allow an ingress for an army invading from the north. One of these defiles is the well-known Darial Pass, between Vladikavkaz and Tiflis. The other is at Derbent, being the narrow opening left between the easternmost spur of the Caucasus and the waves of the Caspian.¹ Here lies the 'Gate of Gates' — the very key to Persia in ancient times, and we can well understand that when Peter the Great returned from his Persian campaign and entered Moscow in triumph, there was no more precious trophy carried in pomp before him than the keys of the city of Derbent.²

The name Derbent,³ as it is commonly pronounced, is really

¹ Both of these natural gateways were strongly fortified in ancient times, and the natural rampart of the mountains was strengthened by carefully constructed massive walls. The tradition that Alexander (or more probably some of his generals) built the fortifications in the vicinity of the Darial Pass (if not also at Derbent) was current as early as Josephus (37–c. 100 A.D.) in his *De Bello Jud.* 7. 7. 4, and is found likewise in Procopius, *De Bello Persico*, 1. 10 (ed. Haury, 1, p. 46, Leipzig, 1905; ed. Dindorf, 1, p. 48, ll. 15–19), who accompanied the Roman general Belisarius on a campaign in these regions (528–532 A.D.). This shows that the fortifications in the passes existed prior to Anushirvan the Just, i.e. Chosroes I (531–579 A.D.). The great wall called that of 'Gog and

Magog' is expressly attributed to Alexander by the Arab (Persian) writer Tabari (838–923 A.D.) in his *Chronique* (tr. Zotenberg, 3. 498–501), and it appears in Marco Polo (ed. Yule, 1. ch. 4) and elsewhere. See, furthermore, the dissertation by De Goeje, *De muur van Gog en Magog*, in *Verlagen en Mededelingen d. k. Akad. v. Wetensch., Afd. Letterk.*, 3. reeks, Deel V, pp. 87 ff.; and for other references consult the article 'Gog and Magog' in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 6. 19–20, New York, 1904.

² Cf. Hanway, 1. 369, n. 1.

³ I have chosen the spelling Derbent on account of the modern pronunciation in Russian, although the older form is Derbend (Darband), as the etymology shows. See next note.

Darband, from the Persian *Dar-band*, 'Closer of the door' or 'Closed door' — a fitting appellation from its remarkable strategic position.¹ In olden times (as the quotations in my monograph will show)² it was most often called 'Iron Gate' (*Damir-Kapū* in Turkish), or 'Gate of Gates' (*Bāb al-Ābwāb* in Arabic), or, par excellence, 'The Gate' (*Al-Bāb*).³ The Romans, who had to do with the pass in their wars and treaties with the Persians, knew it generally as the 'Caspian Gates' (*Caspiae Portae*) of the Caucasus — a designation that is to be carefully distinguished, however, from the real, or historic, Caspian Gates, east of Rhagae, a day's journey from Teheran, through which Alexander passed in pursuit of Darius Codomannus, as I shall describe in Chapter VIII and discuss in a separate monograph to be published later.

The foundation of these walls of Derbent is ascribed to two heroes famous in history — to Alexander himself (d. 323 B.C.), or to the Sasanian monarch Khusru (Anushirvan the Just), more commonly known as Chosroes I (531–579 A.D.), the latter monarch being said to have been the real builder of the bul-

¹ The second of these two meanings is the one generally given, but the former one, 'shutter of the gates, i.e. defender of the pass,' is insisted upon by Kazem-Beg, *Derbend Nāmeḥ, or the History of Derbend, translated from a select Turkish Version*, p. 21, St. Petersburg, 1851. This rare book is a storehouse of information on the historic side of Derbent, and I shall frequently refer to it in this chapter, because Kazem-Beg, although a professor at the University of St. Petersburg, was a native of Derbent, and he writes with the knowledge and pride of one who knows well the home of his birth.

² This monograph is to be called *Caspiae Portae, or the Caspian Gates of Antiquity*.

³ Among the various classical ref-

erences to this pass are Tacitus, *Annals*, 6. 33; Joannes Lydus, *De Magistratibus*, 3. 51–53; Priscus, *Fragm.* 31, 37; see also Spiegel, *Erānische Alterthumskunde*, 3. 372, n. 2. Observe, furthermore, that the Armenians called the Pass of Derbent Pahak Čorai, or Kapann Čorai ('Watch,' or 'Pass,' of Čor), as well as Honaç Pahak ('Watch of the Huns') and a number of other appellations. From the Armenian Čor came the Persian (and Pahlavi) Čor, which appears in the Arab geographers as Šūl, and in Byzantine writers as Τζούρ; while yet another Armenian name of the same pass, Iuroi Pahak, is the source of the Byzantine Ἰουροειπιάχ (see Marquart, *Erānšahr*, p. 100–101).

wark in its strongest form. Since the tradition that Alexander (or some one associated with him) 'fortified with iron gates' the Darial Pass to the west of Derbent is as old as Josephus, or the first century A.D.; and since it is expressly referred to by Procopius, who took part in the Roman campaign against Persia in 528 A.D., before Anushirvan came to the throne, it is likely that there is real truth in the view that Alexander was the originator of the wall in its longest extent.¹ It is extremely probable that, although Alexander himself was never in the Caucasus during his invasion of Asia, he must have secured the submission of the country through some of his troops, since he was invariably most careful to guard his rear and to prevent any possibility of being cut off from his constant connection with Greece.² It is noteworthy, moreover, that the lower portion of Derbent, which borders on the sea, was still called, three hundred years ago, 'the Greek City' — *Shahr Yunān*.³

As soon as I had glanced at the portion of the walls not far from the railway station, I said to my guide, 'Yes, surely they are at least as old as the Sasanian period, fourteen centuries ago, if not older.' The peculiar style of the masonry and the man-



ner of laying the stones, with narrower upright settings fitted closely between the larger blocks, was precisely what I had seen in the Sasanian ruins at Takht-i Suleiman.⁴

¹ See the references, p. 61, n. 3.

² A part of the tradition that Alexander himself had been in the Caucasus may have arisen from the fact that certain of his later historians applied the name 'Caucasus' to the great mountain ranges east of the Caspian, and to the chains crossed by Alexander in his campaign from Central Asia into India. This confusion is specifically referred to by Strabo, *Geog.*

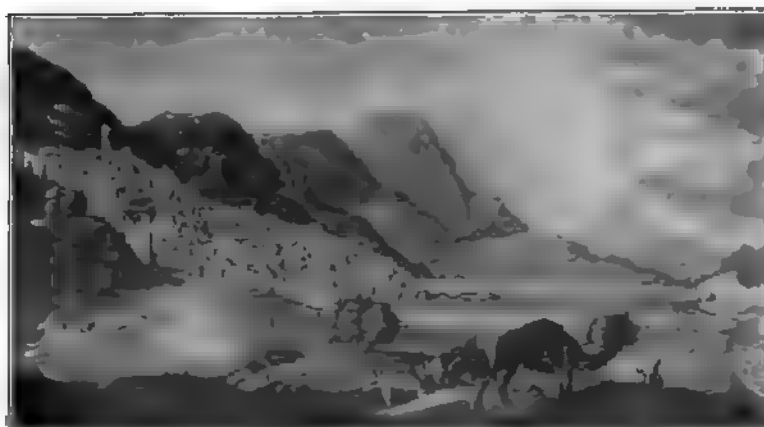
11. 5. 5 (ed. Meineke, 2, p. 710, Leipzig, 1866 = ed. Casaubon, pp. 505-506). For the likelihood that one of Alexander's generals subdued the Caucasus, see Walckenaer, *Sur les dénominations des Portes Caspiennes*, pp. 224-225 (in *Mém. Inst. de France, Acad. Inscr.* Paris, 1824).

³ See the citation from Olearius, *Reisebeschreibungen*, given on p. 66.

⁴ See my *Persia*, p. 129.

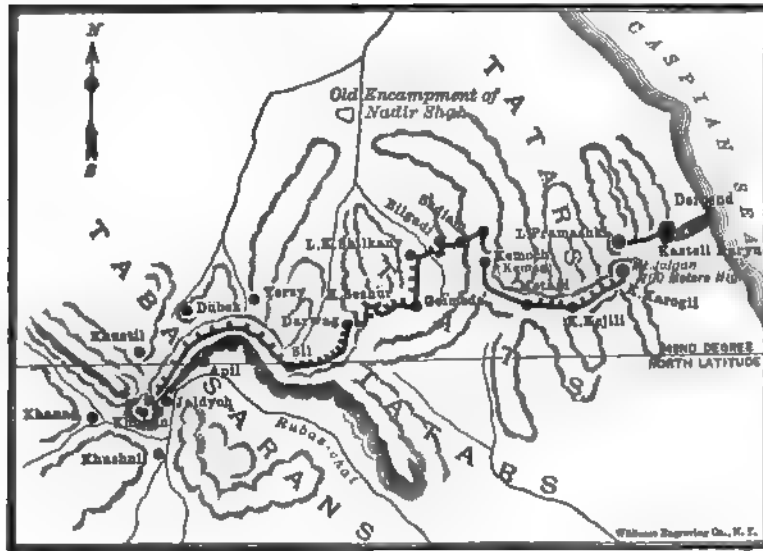


SKETCH OF DERBENT BY OLEARIUS IN 1637



VIEW OF DERBENT IN 1796

The walls of Derbent gird both the north and the south side of the town, running in two nearly parallel lines from sea to hill, in a direction slightly from northeast to southwest.¹ The space between them at the strand, as I estimated, is about 500 yards;² but where the ramparts join the fortress, two miles or more back on the hill, at an elevation of about a thousand feet, the interval



WALLS OF DEBBENT

After the Sketch Map of Erekert

is only about a hundred and fifty yards.³ The city seems to stream down in a cascade between them;⁴ although in modern times, after enjoying the advantages of a hundred years of peace, it has begun to overflow considerably to the south beyond the wall on that side.

Both lines of rampart thrust their arms to the very edge of the

¹ This is shown also in the sketch map by Erckert, *Kaukasus*, p. 216, Leipzig, 1888, here reproduced.

² I find this same distance given in the observations of Erckert, p 219.

* Burrough (Hakluyt Soc. 1886.

2. 463) gives 160 paces; Erckert (p. 220), 140 paces.

* 'Une cascade de maisons' is the graphic expression used by Alexandre Dumas, *Impressions de voyage: Le Caucase*, I. 378, Paris, 1880.

sea; and in ancient times, when the Caspian was higher than at present, they actually extended some distance into the water,¹ while the waves have always dashed over their base when a heavy storm was raging.² Traces of the mole or jetty were still to be seen a generation or two ago.³ The building of the great flanks to form a shield and harbor was a piece of early engineering that called forth expressions of wonder from the Arab-Persian geographers a thousand years ago. From their numerous statements on the subject, of which I have made a complete collection, I quote here only the remarkable description given by Masudi (943 A.D.) of the method said to have been employed by Anushirvan in constructing the extensions.

‘He [i.e. Anushirvan] built the wall in the sea, with rocks, iron, and lead placed upon the inflated skins of bullocks. As the structure rose, the skins sank lower and lower until they reached the bottom of the sea, while the wall arose above the water. Thereupon, men dived down to the skins and cut them with knives and daggers, so that the wall rested upon the ground at the bottom of the sea. It remains until this time, which is the year three hundred and thirty-two (332 A.H. = 943 A.D.). This place of the wall in the sea is called *Al-Kaid*, “The Chain,” because it barred certain enemies’ ships from coming by sea. Then he extended the wall across the land between Mount Kabkh (Caucasus) and the sea.’⁴

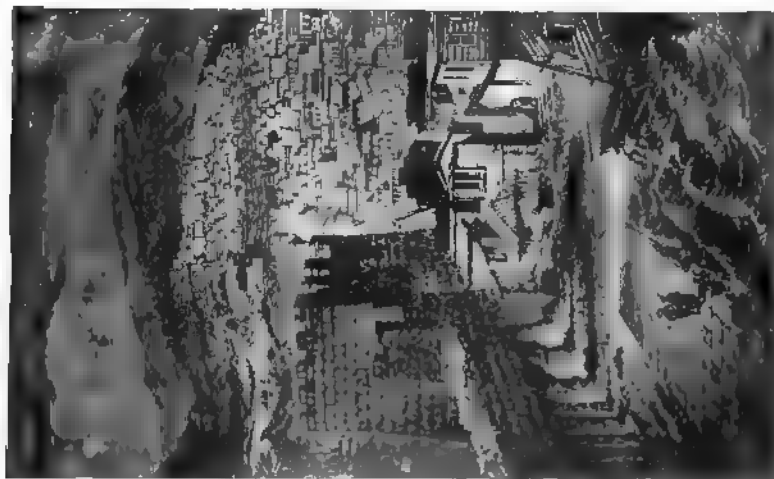
The chain, here referred to, is mentioned by several of the early writers, and was from mole to mole across the opening of the passage between them, so as effectually to bar the entrance or exit of ships without the permission of the guards who were specially placed in charge of the port. A similar mode of harbor and river defence by chains is familiar to all nations.

¹ There are numerous allusions to this fact, especially in the Arab-Persian writers; see likewise Josafa Barbaro (1474 A.D.), p. 86 (Hakluyt Soc.), and cf. Kazem-Beg, *Derbend Nāmeḥ*, pp. 19, 96.

² See Tacitus, *Annals*, 6. 33, and cf. Walckenaer, *op. cit.* p. 216; also Hanway, *Hist. Acct. Casp. Sea*, 1. 371, and Dumas, *op. cit.* p. 278.

³ See Kazem-Beg, *op. cit.* p. 96, n. 1.

⁴ Masudi, *Marūj adh-Dhahab*, tr. Barbier de Meynard, *Les Prairies d’or*, 2. 196. As noted by Kazem-Beg, p. 97, the same account as to the manner of construction is mentioned by Kazvini, but doubts on the subject were expressed by Katib Chelebi, *Jahān Numā*, p. 395, Constantinople, 1145 A.H. = 1732 A.D.



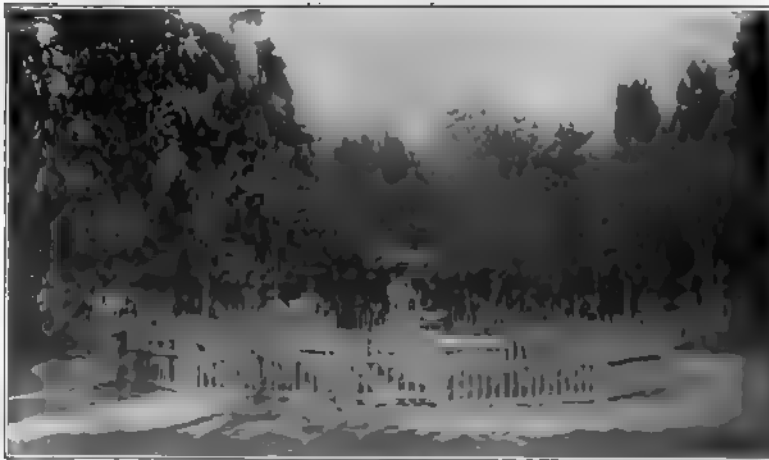
SHIRE OF DERBENT ABOUT 1850



REPUTED PORTRAIT OF ANUSHIRVAN THE JUST



WHERE PETER THE GREAT LODGED AT DERBENT IN 1722



IN THE PARK AT DERBENT

There is little doubt that Derbent, which is not a natural harbor like Baku, was artificially made into a roadstead because of the importance of its strategic position. I have not been able to find a good old picture of the haven itself, for the sketch by Olearius in 1636–1637 and an anonymous drawing of Derbent in 1796 (reproduced here from Eichwald's *Caucasus*)¹ are not minute enough; but I present here, with the other two, a view (apparently of about the middle of the nineteenth century) based on a drawing by Moynet from an older sketch, as it conveys an idea of how the shore appeared in the last century.² Many of the blocks that formed the piers have been appropriated in course of time for building purposes, as always happens in the case of great ruined structures when near growing towns.³ The present railway line, moreover, cuts directly through the walls at a point where the ends almost reach the sea, nearly striking one of the round bastions on the northern side.⁴

The breadth of the end of the northernmost wall, where the rampart widens slightly, is twenty-four yards; but as it recedes from the shore it becomes somewhat narrower, being only about ten yards wide in some places, yet broad enough to drive a wagon upon, as Olearius said in 1637, if not for twenty horses to go abreast, as was stated by Ibn Fakih al-Hamadani, six hundred years before him.⁵ The height of the rampart varies, though it is seldom less than thirty feet, being highest near the gates, of which there once were six or more.⁶

The construction is of large blocks, four feet in length and two feet in height, with smaller upright stones, two feet high but only eight inches broad, between them. Many of the

¹ Eichwald, *Reise in den Caucasus*, 1834, gives the date of the view as 1796, but I have not been able to locate the source of the drawing.

² This picture, after Moynet, is given in Yule's *Marco Polo*, p. 55.

³ See Kazem-Beg, *Derbend Nāmeḥ*, p. 96, n. 1.

⁴ The 'two round bastions,' which

guard either end by the sea, are mentioned by Hanway, p. 371, and are seen in the view dating from the year 1796.

⁵ Olearius, *Reisebeschreibungen*, p. 377 (= tr. Davies, p. 403); Ibn Fakih (903 A.D.), ed. De Goeje, 5. 5. 291.

⁶ See Kazem-Beg, p. 100.

larger blocks, however, are of still greater proportions, so that Ibn Fakih (903 A.D.) said that it would take fifty men to lift them.¹ All the blocks are carefully set; and some of the oldest accounts of them speak of their being bound together by cramps of iron,² so that they must have formed a perfect breastwork in the days when artillery was not known.

The composition of the stone itself is noteworthy, as its basis is a peculiar calcareous stone filled with mussel shells, characteristic of the so-called Aral-Caspian formation, and found also in the mountains near by.³ It must be added that in some places the nature of the stone varies slightly.

We walked a considerable distance along the top of the bulwarks, which were high enough, I noticed, to cause my guide giddiness when the path led near the edge; and then we descended at a place where there was a breach in the wall, probably due to an old gate, and were assisted down by the helping hand of a Russian soldier who chanced to be strolling along the rampart.

While standing on the wall, I thought of the old picture of Derbent, sketched by Olearius three hundred years ago and reproduced above. The outline of the two parallel rows of rampart was still as distinct as then, but the Dubāru, or 'Double Wall,' which once ran midway across the town, connecting them and shutting off the lower quarter, had long since disappeared.⁴ Olearius's description of the city, in connection with his drawing, is so good that I repeat it, though the flavor of its old-fashioned German is somewhat lost in my literal translation.

'The city is divided into three parts. The Uppermost (A) is the Castle on the mountain, where the Governor hath his dwelling. 'Twas

¹ Ibn Fakih, ed. De Goeje, *Bibl. Geog. Arab.* 5. 291.

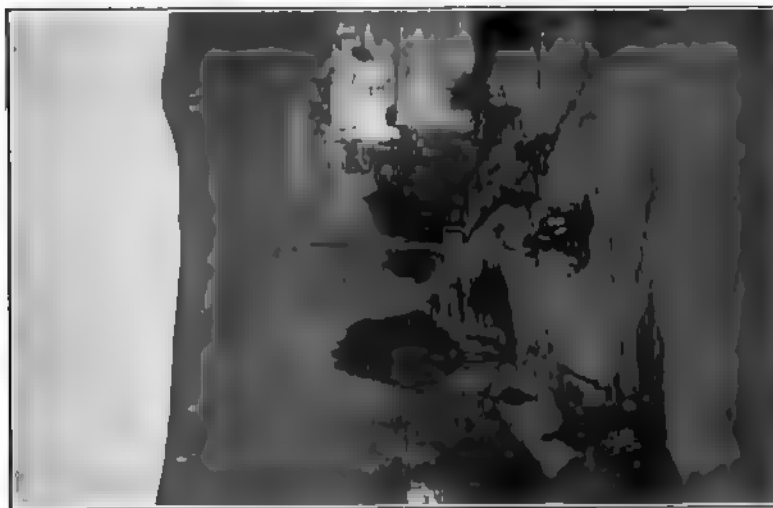
² Ibn Fakih, 5. 291. Eichwald, *Reise*, 1. 127, states that the Persians asserted that a cement of 'Hirschhornleim(!)' [hartshorn glue?] originally bound the blocks together.

³ See Trautschold, *Ueber die Naphtha-quellen von Baku*, in *Zt. d. Deutschen Geologischen Gesellschaft*, 26. 259, Berlin, 1874; and compare Olearius, p. 377, and Hanway, 1. 370.

⁴ See Kazem-Beg, p. 101, n. 1 and n. 2.



RUSSIAN CHURCH AT DERBENT



THE MAIN THOROUGHFARE OF DERBENT



THE BAYAT GATE AND THE CITADEL HEIGHT OF DERBENT

guarded by two pieces and five hundred soldiers belonging to the two nations, Aiurmulu and Koidursha. The Middle Part (B) is inhabited by Persians; its lower side hath been much devastated, in fact by their own King, Emir Hemze, Chodabende's son, when he received them back from the Turk Mustapha, to whom they had voluntarily submitted themselves.¹ The Lower Part (E) is two thousand simple paces long; it lieth without any houses; within it are merely some gardens and fields; it was inhabited by the Greeks, they say, and is still called to-day *Shahr Yunan*, "Greek Town."²

It was into this lowest section of the town, as just described by Olearius, that we descended from the parapet; but instead of being desolate, or occupied by Greeks, it was a flourishing quarter of the Russian town, as the photograph shows.

Here was the place where Peter the Great made his arsenal,³ and here are now located the soldiers' barracks and the parade ground. Not far away, near a sort of market square, is the place where this great czar lodged in 1722 before taking quarters in the citadel. It is simply a vaulted hovel of mud or cement, entered by a small door, and now surrounded by an open portico that has, across the front, columns connected by a green-painted railing, and with two wooden fences in the rear. A painted sign over the entrance, now nearly illegible, records the fact that Peter stayed there, and two antique cannons, which have long outlived the time when they were of use, still guard either side.⁴

The ordinary shops in this quarter do a modern trade and still show evidence of the old-time stock of fruits and vegetables, for which the place was long renowned, as we know from

¹ Allusion to this event is made by Olearius in the verses he composed to place under his sketch of the town.

² Olearius, p. 377 (= Eng. tr. by Davies, p. 403).

³ Hanway (Cooke), 1. 371.

⁴ I have since found that Dumas, *op. cit.* p. 277, gives the inscription as *Pervâé at dak-novenié Valikavo Petra*, 'the first resting-place of Peter the Great,' and notes that the second of

the two dates (1722, 1848) records the year when the enclosure was built around the cabin. The cannons, he adds, including a third one in the rear, facing the sea, were brought by Peter, and bear the date when they were cast at Veronezha on the Don, 1715. For a picture of the structure in 1860-1861 see Dorn, *Atlas*, pl. 5 b, and compare the same author in *Mélanges asiatiques*, 4. 496.

early writers.¹ A 'Grand Hotel,' not far from the railway station, offers to travelers, who may wish to partake of its hospitality, the usual *sakuska* luncheon, with spirit or malt beverages, *vodka* and *pivo*. A half dozen 'phaeton' drivers are waiting near by, ready to strike a bargain with the visitor and to take him through the town, up Bariatinsky Street, as the principal thoroughfare is named, and onward towards the citadel.

A small park, which we pass on the way, looks pretty and green with its chestnut trees and abundant water, and shows that Derbent can still boast of a plentiful supply of that precious fluid flowing from its mountains. The road is muddy, but becomes less so when it reaches an unassuming plaza, where the Russian church stands among other buildings, and here is found a rough pavement in the street leading up to the bazar and to the higher portion of the city, where Tatars, Persians, Armenians, Georgians, and Circassians thread their way through narrower lanes and tell us we have arrived at the Oriental section of Derbent.

Here I could imagine how Harun ar-Rashid, the romantic caliph of 'Arabian Nights' fame, might have roamed in his favorite manner of incognito, for we know that he spent seven years at Derbent (779-786 A.D.), and a son of his is said to have been buried near the Gate of Kirkhlar, or 'Portal of the Forty,' named after the cemetery not far from the northern wall of the city.² In this graveyard rest 'forty' martyrs, with hundreds more, who fell fighting for the faith of Islam against the foemen from the north in the early days before Muhammadanism triumphed. Their graves, which generally bear some inscription, have been described by others who have visited the

¹ See, for example, Abu 'l-Kasim (948 A.D.), tr. D'Ohsson, *Des peuples du Caucase*, p. 6, Paris, 1828; Idrisi (1154 A.D.), tr. Jaubert, *Géog. d'Édrisi*, 2. 229-230, Paris, 1840; Josafa Barbaro (1474), p. 90 (Hakluyt Soc.); Contarini (1475), p. 146 (Hakluyt Soc.).

² See Kazem-Beg, pp. 128, 129, 143, rem. 8; and cf. Klaproth, in *Journal asiatique*, 29 (nouv. sér. 3, 1829), p. 467. On the list of martyrs, see Kazem-Beg, pp. 151-153, 231-232.

spot.¹ The chief mosque, in the heart of the city, is of great antiquity, for it owes its foundation, with seven others, to the Arab Maslama, the champion of Islam, whose expedition to Derbent in 733 A.D. resulted in the conversion of the greater part of its inhabitants to the religion of the Prophet.²

In an instant I was reminded of all that the city had passed through in its long history. Perhaps the inviolated soldiers of Alexander, when quartered in the lower portion of the town, had found their way occasionally up to the very place where we were driving. Here of old was the real Persian section when Derbent was the last outpost of the great Sasanian Empire and was a factor in the various treaties with Rome. How often, too, the hostile hordes of Turanians from the north had stormed its gates! The Arabs, as we have just seen, had swept across it, sword in hand, only to be checked by the descendants of the same Turanians, the matchless horsemen of the Tatars or Turkomans from the north.³ Then Turkish khans had swayed its fortunes, alternating with Persian lords, until Peter the Great found the city a willing victim in 1722. Nevertheless it was again seized by the khans six years later, only to be cruelly ravaged later by Nadir Shah (about 1743) and to remain for a time again in Persian hands till the Russians besieged it in 1796 and finally incorporated the town into their government in 1813 by the Gulistan Treaty.

We had meantime driven through the native quarter, which is not large, and were now riding through a breach in the southern wall (Alexander's wall?) out to an ancient well not a mile be-

¹ Olearius, p. 378 (= tr. Davies, p. 404); Hanway, 1. 372; Kazem-Beg, pp. 42, 48, rem. 11, 152-154, 231-232; see also the long description of the graveyard and its inscriptions by Eichwald, *Reise in den Caucasus*, 1. 111-121. A picture of the cemetery in 1860-1861 may be seen in Dorn, *Atlas*, pl. 3 b.

² The expedition is described in the *Derbend Nāmeḥ* (Pt. 5), tr. Kazem-Beg, pp. 88-89, 93; the mosque is described in detail by Kazem-Beg, *op. cit.* p. 99; cf. also some brief memoranda by Hanway (Cooke), *op. cit.* 1. 371.

³ Kazem-Beg, pp. 3-118.

yond.¹ This fountain is elaborately built of stone in semicircular form, and a millennium ago it had two stone lions (evidently Sasanian) on either side of its steps. We watched the natives coming and going as they drew refreshing drafts from its ever flowing depths, but they seemed to pay little heed to the fine view that was to be had from this point over the city, with the cerulean sea beyond it, nor did they give a thought to the old graveyard so near at hand.

The tenants of this ancient field of bones, which spreads on both sides of the road, are mostly Armenians. The headstones above the graves, all aged, are of a soft granite and present a curious appearance, being shaped like posts or beams, but every one out of plumb and leaning in every conceivable direction. Many of them are marked by inscriptions in Armenian; some in Syriac, I think; and a number showed traces of color in the letters, which gave them a weird picturesqueness. I wish I had known at the time (but I came across the statement only by chance later, in a record of three hundred years ago) that an English gunner boy was buried in this cemetery. A letter written by Christopher Burrough to his uncle in 1579 states, in quaint terms: —

‘The 5 [of September, 1579] *Tobias Atkins*, the gunners boy, died of the fluxe, who was buried the 6. day, 2. miles Southward of the Castle of Derbent, where the Armenian Christians do vsually burie their dead.’²

The grave would hardly have been marked at the time, nor could it be distinguished now, otherwise some future traveler might be led to lay upon it some of the wild flowers that grow so prettily near by.

An odd legend is associated with this home of the dead—at least it was current three hundred years ago when Olearius

¹ This well is mentioned in the year 903 A.D. by Ibn Fakiḥ, 5. 291, and is referred to by Dumas, *op. cit.* 1. 273; it seems to be alluded to in the word *theatro* in the description by Olearius, p. 378 (cf. tr. Davies, p. 404).

² See Magan and Coote, *Voyages by Anthony Jenkinson and Others*, 2. 460, London, 1886 (Hakluyt Soc.), with a reference to the vol. of Hakluyt for 1589, pp. 440–453.



THE BAYAT GATE IN THE SOUTHERN WALL OF DERBENT

visited the spot. It is a story of a skull — the tale of Tsumtsum, which means 'skull' in Turkish. As the legend runs, the hallowed feet of our Savior had trod this ground, and chanced to kick against the skull.¹ Being curious to know whose skull it was, He restored the owner to life by a miracle, and learned that he was Tsumtsum, a mighty potentate in ancient days. Tsumtsum, in turn, learned through conversation who Jesus was, and thereupon embraced the Christian faith; but feeling lost amid the newer world, where he knew no man and was known of no man, he begged the Savior to allow him to die again. His wish was granted, and ever afterwards this resting-place of the dead has borne Tsumtsum's name.²

I had begun to feel somewhat discouraged about finding any real traces of great antiquity, and was turning back toward the town and the station, when my guide caught sight of a huge gateway of stone in the historic wall we had been examining not long before, and he asked if it might perchance interest me. In an instant we were driving to the spot. And lo! there, sure enough, under the looming portal were two old inscriptions. My researches were now beginning to bear fruit.

All idea of returning early to Baku was instantly given up. I was full of excitement, and began at once a closer study of the gateway, feeling assured of its antiquity, though I did not know its history till I got back to my books at Columbia and could search among the Arab and Persian records of a thousand years ago.

The portal is an imposing arch of solid masonry, the stones being akin in material to those used for the walls, though somewhat smaller in size for convenience in building. The front, some fifty feet high, rears its head slightly above the top of the rampart.³ A second arch, with a smaller vaulting and

¹ There were Nestorian Christians early in the Caucasus, although Olearius (p. 377) states the contrary as regards Derbent.

² Olearius, p. 378 (= tr. Davies, p. 404).

³ This feature of the towers overtopping the rampart by scarcely a

backed by a curtain of stone, springs up a dozen feet behind it, filling the other side of the doorway and completing the double masking. The cross stones, which support this curtain and discharge their thrust upon imposts on either side, are locked firmly in position by a curiously notched block which does service as a keystone. The fact that well-curved arches are used in the construction of both the inner and the outer doorway, as in the case of the other great gateway, in the northern wall, a picture of which I also reproduce, is significant, as is explained in the footnote below.¹ The span of the main arch is about seventeen feet between the two columns that support its sides.² The shafts of these piers are round, and they are topped by carved capitals; while on either side there opens inward a narrower arch or niche surmounted by a slightly honeycombed design, a later development of which is found in the familiar honeycomb capping that occurs as a decorative finish of arches in all Muhammadan-Persian architecture. The bow of the great arch, which is slightly pointed, shows, furthermore, an artistic rim with a square framing, and is set off above by an arc of stones whose graceful sweep attracts the eye to the loophole slits in the parapet, through which the warriors cast their missiles in ancient days, while an easy flight of steps in the rear still allows one to mount to the sentinel top. The doors that close the portal are of heavy beams, ten inches thick,

yard is characteristic also of the other gateways found in the wall that runs back into the Caucasus from Derbent, as we learn from Bestuchef-Marlinsky, whose description, written in 1832, is quoted by Dumas, *Le Caucase*, 1. 302. See also the next footnote.

¹The Russian officer Bestuchef-Marlinsky, who inspected the construction of the wall far back into the mountains, in 1832, as stated in the preceding footnote, draws attention to the *absence complète d'arches* in the gates found in the extension of the

line of ramparts, as contrasted with the vaulted *arches dans les portes de Derbent*; owing to this absence of vaulted arches and the lowness of the towers, he is probably right in surmising that the wall as a whole may be anterior in date to the sixth century of our era; see Dumas, *op. cit.* 1. 302.

²In rough figures the measurements of the entire gate are approximately: height, 48 ft.; breadth, 29 ft., or 17 between the pillars, which are about 2 ft. thick, with niches 4 ft. wide on each side.

and covered with iron plates, but riddled with bullets. I doubt, however, if these doors are ancient, though they are old.

This was not all. Above the minor arch (and indicated by the black shadow cast in the photograph) are the remains of 'an old lion-head over the doorway'—as my note-book records. I was not aware when I made this memorandum that I should be able to trace the history of this gateway, or its mate in the northern wall, for over a thousand years. And now to the main thing! Directly below the lion's battered head are two blocks of stone that contain inscriptions of five and eight lines respectively, while another of seven lines, apparently somewhat later in date, is found lower down to the left. These tablets were the real find of the day; but, for completeness, I may add that in the stones near them there was carved the oft-repeated figure of a ring with two lines hanging from it,¹ resembling the familiar Sasanian chaplet with streamers. These devices were generally carved high up at the sides, out of ordinary reach, and not like the late Arabic scrawls, or even Russian capital letters, which had been cut by more recent or modern hands near the third, or lowest, inscription.

Before discussing these inscriptions I must say something regarding the history of the gate as one of the famous portals of Derbent. First let the Arabic writer, Ibn Fakiḥ (903 A.D.), speak. After giving a rather detailed account of Derbent and its varied fortunes in the past, and after describing at length the walls and their extent, as built by Anushirvan, King of Persia, our writer mentions one of the gateways (the one in the northern wall, matching this which I have described) as follows:

'In the city of al-Bab (i.e. Derbent), upon the Bab-Jihad ("Gate of War") above the wall, are two pillars of stone, a likeness of a lion of white stone upon each pillar, and below these two are two stones upon which are the likenesses of two lionesses' (qu., read 'inscriptions'?).²

¹ One of these emblems is shown in the stone to the right of the two inscriptions reproduced from a photograph.

² Ibn Fakiḥ, ed. De Goeje, *Bibl.*

Geog. Arab. 5. 291. For 'lion[esse]s' سَبْعِينَ we are perhaps to read 'inscriptions' نُحُوتَيْن, through a

The same passage is given almost verbatim by Yakut in 1225 A.D., as a quotation, but without mentioning the source.¹

The moment that my eye fell upon these two old passages I knew that the description of the Bab-Jihad, or 'Gate of War,' in the northern wall (see the list of names of the gates still preserved, as given by Kazem-Beg),² was practically identical with the Bayat Kapü (in Russian, Vorota Vayat), or 'Gate of the Bayats,' which I was examining. Here, as seen in the photograph, are the 'two pillars of stone,' here the 'lion' over the arch, and here the 'inscriptions' (as we are perhaps to read instead of 'lionesses') on two stones. There was a kind of joy in finding these old passages to bear on the gateway, as there had been a thrill in seeing the gate itself with its chiseled tablets. The tablets, as I have since noted after gaining access to my books, had been observed by Olearius and by one or two other Europeans, but I know of no detailed description of the stones and their location, or of any previous photograph of the inscriptions here reproduced.³

miswriting of the Arabic characters, although Yakut (see next note) follows the reading 'lionesses,' with

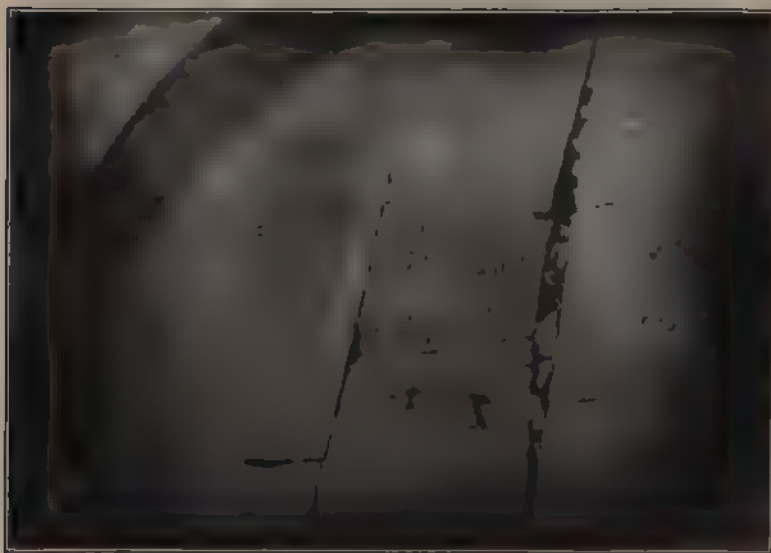
لَبُوتَيْن *labu'atain*, in his quotation.

¹ See Yakut, ed. Wüstenfeld, 1. 441, Leipzig, 1886, and cf. Yakut, tr. Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog. de la Perse*, p. 72.

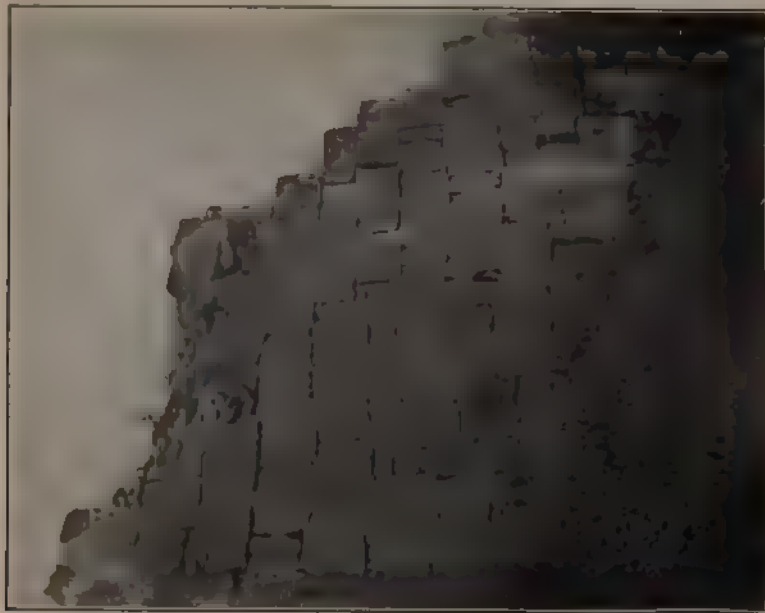
² The name Bab-Jihad for a gate in the northern wall is among those noted by Kazem-Beg, p. 100, as still given. Its location in the north rampart as the 'Gate of War' is natural, as the inroads came from that quarter. The name 'Bab-Jihad' was known equally to Tabari (838-923), who refers (*Chronique*, tr. Zotenberg, 4. 270) to an Arab expedition under Jarrah from the south northward as passing out of the Bab-Jihad. According to Kazem-Beg, p. 100, the Bayat Gate derived its

name from the Bayats, 'a people who form the greater part of the present inhabitants.'

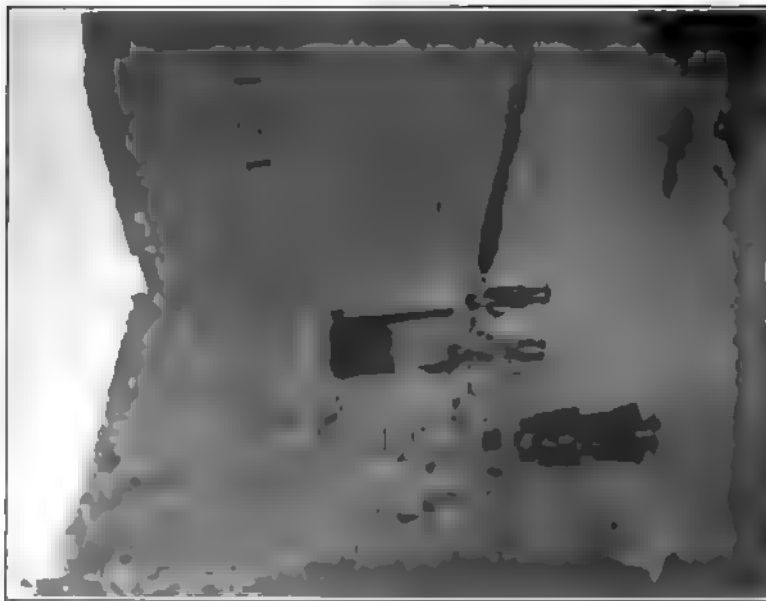
³ The incidental references that I know are by Olearius (1637), p. 377 (= tr. Davies, p. 404); Dumas (1858), p. 279; and a brief mention by Schuyler (author of *Turkistan*, London, 1876), in a letter referred to by Yule, *Marco Polo*, 2. 537, n. 3. Yule states that Schuyler had communicated to him in this letter 'some notes regarding inscriptions that have been found at or near Derbend, embracing Cufic of A.D. 465, Pehlvi, and even Cuneiform.' From this brief memorandum I cannot tell whether the inscriptions referred to are actually those in question. Eichwald, *Reise in den Caucasus in 1825-1826*, 1. 122, on the authority of a Moslem priest, states (as I have recently found) that an



ARABIC INSCRIPTIONS OVER THE BAYAT GATE



A FLANGE OF THE CITADEL WALL CONTAINING
INSCRIBED STONES



ENTRANCE TO THE CITADEL OF DERBENT



GATE IN THE CITY'S NORTHERN WALL

After examining the gateway, I went back to the town to secure a local photographer, as all the films in my camera were exhausted. On the way we paid a visit to the Chief of Police — an odd necessity! — so as to insure no interference with the work of photographing, especially as there is still considerable traffic through the old archway; and I wished likewise to be guaranteed permission later to enter the neighboring fortress (forbidden ground), on the chance that I might possibly find other inscriptions.

All this took time and gave opportunity for the idling natives to gather in a crowd to see what in their dilapidated gateway could so engage the *farangi*, or stranger, who worked on, absorbed in copying the difficult letters (for the light was not good at the time), but whose enthusiasm became contagious to his guide, the photographic attendant, and even to the cluster of onlookers.

My photographs at the moment were not very successful, but I sent again on a brighter day, and finally secured the pictures which are here presented.

My first impression, due to my hope, was that the tablets might be Sasanian, like the walls; but they turned out to be Arabic of the eleventh century, and that portion of the gate had apparently been remodeled. With the help of my colleagues in the Semitic Department at Columbia I am now able to give their general contents, at least in a tentative manner. Both begin with the Bismillah formula, quoted from the first chapter of the Kuran, and the upper one of the two tablets contains the date 435 A.H. (= 1044 A.D.) — an evidence that the gateway

inscription on the gate in the north wall was composed 'in alt-arabischer Sprache,' and had been copied by his guide's father, some sixty years before, and rendered into New Persian, but he himself could not secure a transcript of the tablet. He refers likewise (1. 111) to mentions of inscriptions in general at Derbent by Bruce, Gärber,

and Gmelin, but the books are not accessible to me. I was told in the Tiflis Commercial Bank at Baku that the tablets which I have described had been copied and reproduced in an Armenian work that had appeared some years ago, but the title was not known to my informant.

must have been rebuilt, as we know that the ramparts were more than once destroyed, at least in part. This tablet, so far as legible, reads:¹ —

[1] 'In the Name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Lord of the Day of Judgment. [3] We worship Thee, and we beg help of Thee. [4] . . . [5] In the month of Rajab of the year [*in the margin*] 435 [A.H. = March, 1044 A.D.].'

The lower of the two tablets is similar and runs: —

[1] 'In the Name of God the [2] Merciful, the Compassionate. [3] There is no God but Allah. Muhammed is [4] the Prophet of God. . . . [5] We worship Thee (?), we beg help of Thee (?). He has repaired (?) and caused it to be rebuilt (?).'

The third, or lowest, inscription is in Syriac characters, but it has not yet been wholly deciphered, so I reserve it for reproduction and publication later.

Securing copies of these three tablets gave a new verve to further researches, and I led the way, followed by my guide, the photographer, and the more active members of the mob, at a lively pace up the hill to Narin-Kalah, the citadel. The height of this fortress was now to be scaled with an aim different, I imagine, from that at any time when it had been mounted before; not the booty of conquest, but the historic treasures of the past were in view. To my delight, high up on the projecting flange of the city wall, where it joins the fortress, I found carved (this time in Syriac letters) a name *M(?)arnisa bar Kais*, 'Marnisa, the son of Kais,' as my friend Dr. Yohannan reads it.² At the foot of the rampart, almost perpendicularly under this stone and carved close to the ground, is still another name in the same character, repeated with a slight variant, but apparently to be read [*A?*]*llah Malkišō* (or *Hēnānīšō*), probably written by a

¹ For the decipherment of the two inscriptions from the photograph, so far as the letters in it are legible, supplemented by my transcript, I am indebted to the kindness of Dr. Nich-

olas A. Koenig, Lecturer at Columbia, and to Dr. Yohannan and Professor Gottheil.

² The first letter is not quite distinct; instead of *M* it may be *T* or *B*.

Nestorian Christian, as the latter part of the name -išō is certainly Jesus, found not uncommonly in Nestorian proper names, and the second manner of decipherment gives an old appellative still current in Syriac names.¹

Passing farther up, towards the entrance into the fortress, we came across a series of inscriptions, perhaps a dozen, cut on a parapet of gray stone, before one reaches the entrance; they were chiseled in Arabic letters, but were not so old as the tablets, though perhaps five or six centuries old.

We had now reached the doorway of *Narīn Kal'ah*, or 'the Citadel of Narin' (the meaning of the name Narin not being clear), the fortress whose antiquity goes back into the hoary ages. This was the stronghold ascribed by current tradition to Alexander's foundation; it was the Viraparach or Βιραπαράχ of the writers of Byzantine times on the wars of the Romans and the Persians,² and the citadel mentioned by many authors afterwards.

Close by the entrance, however, were seven or eight stones marked with the same kind of characters as those seen on the third, or lowermost, block at the left of the Bayat Kapū Gate, as already described. In style of writing they seem to resemble a cursive Pahlavi, but appear to be Syriac(?), yet the markings are so weathered as to be, for the most part, illegible. Alas, that their mutilated lips can no longer tell a tale that may be connectedly read!

It is worth noting in passing that one of these inscribed blocks had evidently been battered down in some onslaught that had breached the wall, but it was restored afterwards to its place, or to a place not its own — upside down! This fact

¹ The second way of reading is preferred by my colleague, Professor Richard Gottheil. In parts of Western Persia, I know, Nestorian Christians have left cuttings of their names in Syriac.

² See above, references to Joannes

Lydus, *De Magistratibus*, 3. 51-53; Priscus, *Fragm.* 31 and 37; and Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, ed. Budge, *Hist. Alex.* p. 140, l. 12. These passages in full will be found discussed in my forthcoming monograph, *Caspia Portae*.

comes in most opportunely in connection with a find I have since made in Armenian literature about an inscription on the walls of this very citadel. Quite incidentally I came across the passage, quoted by Marquart, who could hardly have divined at the moment the pertinency which his quotation would have in this particular direction. The citation is from the Armenian historian Ēvond, and it tells how the Arab soldiers twelve centuries ago, after vanquishing the Huns, had found in the fortification of Derbent a stone with an inscription which showed that the Roman emperor Marcianus (450–457) had built a particular tower from money out of his own treasury, and that it was afterwards destroyed but rebuilt again.¹ The passage reads as follows : —

‘In the second year of his reign as prince (716 A.D.), Sulaiman, son of Abd al-Malik, gathered numerous troops and placed them under Mslim (i.e. Maslama b. Abd Malik) and sent them to the Caspian Gates.² When they arrived and contended with the troops of the Huns in the city of Darband, they overcame them and pursued them, and, breaching the wall, they destroyed the fortifications of the stronghold. And while they were leveling the walls of the fortification, they discovered a great stone in its foundations, which showed the following inscription engraved upon it: “Marcianus, the monarchical emperor, built the town and this tower at the cost of many talents of his treasure. And in later times the Sons of Ismael [i.e. the Muhammadans] will destroy it and build it anew out of their treasures.”’³

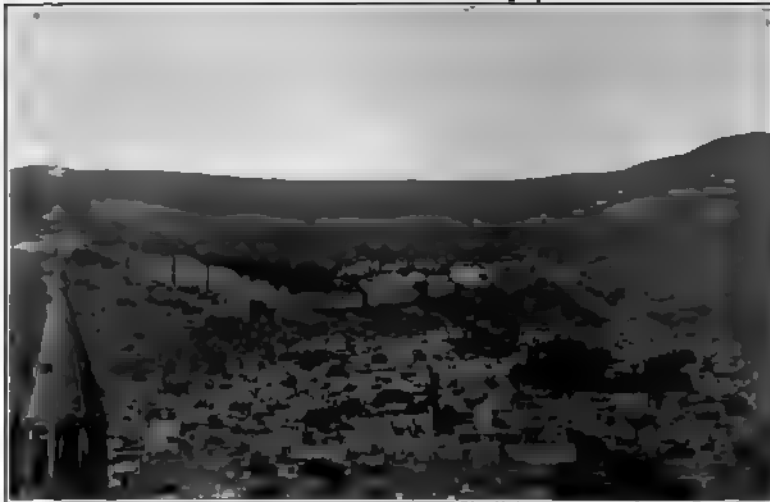
The stone appears no longer to exist, yet who can tell but that some day an antiquarian may be drawn to Derbent by suggestions from the present chapter, and may discover this or kindred treasures that await the archaeologist’s enthusiasm and time?

¹ This might possibly be supposed to allude to the gate called *Kaisar* in the city wall (cf. Kazem-Beg, pp. 90, 100), though I hardly think it is likely.

² That is, the ‘Caspian Gates’ in the Caucasus, not the other gates, east of Raghæ, through which Alexander passed.

³ Ēvond, ed. Shahnazarean, p. 64

(tr. Paris, 1856) ; see Marquart, *Ērān-šahr*, p. 105, Berlin, 1901. The reference to the ‘sons of Ismael’ looks like a later addition to the passage, a retrospective prophecy of the Muhammadan victory. As the Armenian original text is not accessible to me, I translate the section from Marquart’s German rendering ; but the whole sense of the passage is easy and clear.



VIEW OF THE CITADEL FROM THE TOWN



STONE STRUCTURE WITHIN THE CITADEL OF DERBENT



POSSIBLY THE RUINS OF A FIRE-SHRINE



PARAPET ON THE NORTHERN SIDE OF THE CITADEL

No Persian sentry longer walks the citadel walls; no Turkish guard patrols the high approach where once the spirits of the mighty dead kept watch and ward on the silent height. The few Russian soldiers that I saw seemed to be on furlough or taking an hour off duty, for they made no attempt to bar the way nor paid any attention to us, although they may have been assigned to prevent any unauthorized encroachment on the forbidden ground. We entered without let or hindrance, save that the old Tatar custodian, who had the rusty key to the inmost door, was enjoying an afternoon siesta in his lodge below the hill, and bitterly resented being disturbed by stray comers on such a mission as mine.

For ages the citadel was the headquarters of the ruling khans. Here was their medieval palace which the Russian lieutenant Butkov described in his journal, over a century ago (1796).¹ He gives an account of the building, which is two stories high, and mentions the decorations in Persian style, with parti-colored glass windows, tiny mirrors, and mural paintings representing scenes of the chase. These are all typically Iranian, but I did not inspect the now dilapidated edifice, because I was looking for something more antique. Nor was I particularly attracted by a low-roofed structure, with a succession of arches, that is noticeable among the many ruins, for, though I may be mistaken, it did not seem to me to be of great antiquity.²

Still higher up, in the compound not far from the crest of

¹ See Butkov, *Materialy dlya novoi istoriye Kavkaza s 1722 po 1803 god*, 2. 580, St. Petersburg, 1869. For a translation of all the passages in this that relate to Derbent, I am indebted to the kindness of my former pupil, Dr. Jacob Zeitlin.

² According to a statement in the *Derbend Nāmeḥ* (tr. Kazem-Beg, p. 89) the Arab general Maslama, in the year 115 A.H. = 733 A.D., found 'in

the citadel a low-roofed edifice; he destroyed it and built in its place an arsenal and storehouses for provisions and naphtha.' The phrase 'low-roofed' is translated by Kazem-Beg (*op. cit.* pp. 89, 96) as 'badly roofed.' Justi, in *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 540, refers to a vaulted structure at Derbent, but it is Derbent (Darbend) in Kurdistan, not this Derbent.

the ramparted hill, are remnants of what appears to be a ruined fire temple of Sasanian times, if I may judge from a certain similarity to the crumbling shrine at Takht-i Sulaiman in Persia, which is known to have been a sanctuary devoted to preserving the sacred flame, and which was destroyed by the Roman emperor Heraclius.¹ The present square chamber, which is adapted in size to such a purpose, the vaulted dome that has half caved in, the situation at almost the highest point of the citadel, well calculated for keeping safe the venerated flame, and the surroundings as a whole, would match excellently with the identification I have suggested, and the ruins would convey the impression that the fire had been quenched by the bloody rain of wars. Out of regard for my Parsi friends in India and Persia I should have recited the *Ātash Nyāyish*, or 'Litany to Fire,' from the Avesta,² but I refrained, contenting myself with a climb still farther up to inspect the noble rounded parapet at the northeast corner of the citadel (a masterwork of heavy masonry) and with a glimpse down into the reservoir well of the fortress, which is so deep that a garrison might withstand a siege for years, so far as a dearth of water might be concerned.

The shadows lengthened as evening came on, and night fell — brightened for me by the sheen of some of the photographic plates that had been developed to record details of the visit — a long day spent, it seemed, successfully and in eager work. The results I hope to have further supplemented, as I have since then sent my guide once more to Derbent with careful instructions to fill in some missing memoranda and to search for still more material in the home of these ancient walls.

The dust of Alexander is no more ; the bones of Anushirvan, plucked by the vultures on the Towers of Silence in accordance with his faith, have become one with Mother Earth ; yet the work of the hands of these two giant builders will long remain to defy time and serve as a mute memorial of a mighty past.

¹ See Jackson, *Persia*, pp. 141-142. *Zoroastrian Litany*, p. 134, New

² See Dhalla, *The Nyaishes*, or York, 1908.



ON THE SHORE OF THE CASPIAN SEA

CHAPTER VI

ON THE CASPIAN TO PERSIA

‘O’er the glad waters of the dark blue sea.’

—BYRON, *The Corsair*, 1.1.1.

‘**WHERE** are the Russian soldiers going?’ — was our inquiry, as squad after squad of one of the Czar’s regiments marched up the gangplank of our steamer, the *Tamara* of the Kavkas-Merkur Line at Baku, late on the evening of our departure. ‘To Lankuran on the Persian frontier, where disturbances are rife,’ was the response. ‘Oh,’ thought I — but I checked myself without adding any comment on the international relations between the Russian Bear, the Persian Cat, and the British Lion, although the problem is as old as the Arab historian and geographer Masudi, who, exactly one thousand years before, when traveling through Iran, in the neighborhood of the Caspian Sea, touched upon the subject of the Russians in connection with Persia. He tells how the Russians, about the year 913 (300 A.H.), made an invasion by sea, ravaging the whole territory south and west of the Caspian, from Tabaristan to Azarbaijan, and harrying the regions from Baku northward to their own borders.¹ Still earlier, another Arab writer, Tabari (838–923), by birth a Persian of Tabaristan, quotes the prince of the province around Derbent as saying that he found himself ‘between two enemies, the Khazars and the Russians.’² The Russo-English Agreement, which was entered into in 1907 in regard to Persian affairs, and the uprisings and

¹ Masudi, *Murūj adh-Dhahab*, ch. 17, tr. Barbier de Meynard, *Prairies d’or*, 2. 18–25. Masudi visited the Caspian provinces on his homeward

way in his travels in Persia and India between 904 and 925 A.D.

² Tabari, *Chronique*, ch. 67, tr. Zotenberg, 3. 496, 498, Paris, 1871.

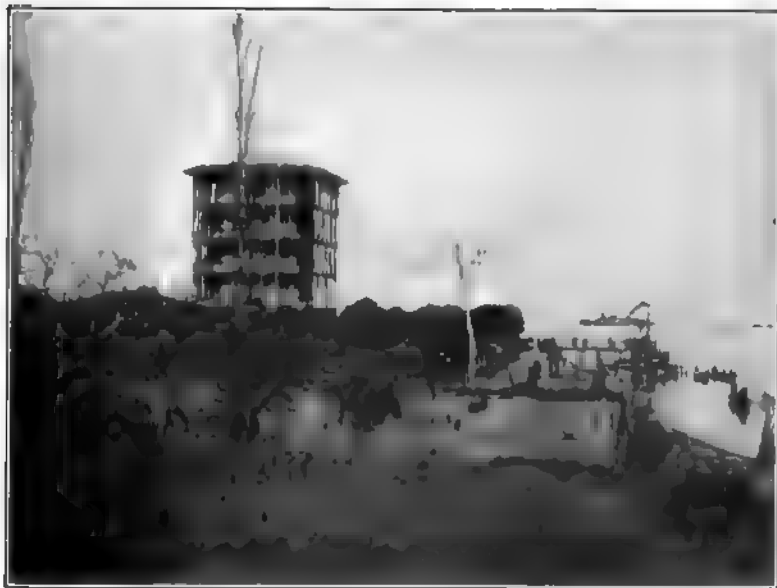
revolutions that have since occurred in the various districts of Persia, have given to such movements of troops as we had just witnessed, a significance that cannot even yet be fully judged. But soon we were casting off from the dock and steaming out of the harbor of Baku into the broad Caspian, whose waves I have plowed seven times on my different journeys.

To one accustomed to crossing the Atlantic twice each year, the voyage on the Caspian Sea, whether boisterously rough or placidly smooth, presents little novel beyond the local color. This huge inland sea, whose tideless waters are slightly less salt than the ocean and are even fresh at the northern end, where the Volga and Ural empty their streams into its volume, has, in the course of time, become a Russian lake, with a thousand craft, largely propelled by steam, furrowing its glistening surface. The enterprising Kavkas-Merkur Line alone runs no less than thirty steamers, north and south, east and west, plying between its main ports at Astrakhan, Baku, Anzali, Astrabad, and Krasnovodsk. The equipment, manning, and handling of these vessels compares favorably with that of other packet-boats of like burden under similar conditions; but the passage money does not include food, which must be paid for extra. Yet the table is all that one could expect, and not the least attractive feature of the voyage is the Russian *zakuska*, or preliminary morsel, before sitting down to the formal meal at noonday or sunset. A graceful touch is sometimes given to this refreshment, especially on the eastern route to Krasnovodsk, when the captain, who is often a Finn or a Swede, ceremoniously conducts one or another of his passengers to the table as a special act of courtesy.

He talks interestingly of the development of shipping—how from a small number of steam craft, with a total burden of 3130 tons in the year 1865, the gross tonnage has since risen to a point considerably over a hundred thousand in cubic capacity; and he points with pride to an almost equal bulk of displacement in the freightage of sailing vessels. The conversation



SCENE NEAR THE SHORE AT ASTARA



A PALACE OF THE SHAH AT ANZALI



OUR BOATMEN ON THE MURDAS



BY THE RIVER ROAD TO RASHT

next veers to antiquity, and we tell him that the Caspian, now eighty-four feet below the ocean level, used to be known by the Persians and Arabs as the Sea of the Khazars, from the Scythian tribes on its northern borders, and it may have been the Zrayah Vourukasha, 'Sea of Wide Bays,' or 'Wide Shores,' in the ancient time of Zoroaster. The Avesta speaks of it as 'the gathering of waters' and 'beyond all waters,' for it was the largest body of water known to the early Iranians.¹ The fact that its extent was considerably greater in that age than now may account for some of the mythical traits in the description of it.² The *kara* fish of the ancient texts may have been the prototype of the modern sturgeon of the Caspian, grown to the legendary proportions that are typical of fish stories.³ The captain is equally versed in the various species of sturgeon — flat-nosed, long-nosed, and medium-nosed — describes how they are caught, and presents a large sturgeon hook as a souvenir of the dinner. The caviar (deliciously fresh from Astrakhan) carries the discussion further to the Caspian fisheries in general. Persia is largely interested in these and annually exports more than three million dollars' worth of fish from her own shores alone.⁴ The evening rapidly wears on, till the late eight bells give the signal for retiring. Next morning a glimpse is had of Lankuran,⁵ the border customs port, and here the Russian troops disembark for their frontier garrison; while in the afternoon, from the captain's bridge, we have a view of Persian Astara, with cloud-capped Savalan in the distance.

¹ See Avesta, Vd. 21. 4; 5. 19-23, and compare other passages in Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, s.v. *Vouru-kaša*, col. 1429, Strassburg, 1904.

² On the earlier extent of the Caspian Sea, cf. Huntington, *Pulse of Asia*, pp. 327-358, N. Y., 1907; and the same author's article, *The Historic Fluctuations of the Caspian Sea*, in *Amer. Geog. Soc. Bull.* 39. 577-596.

³ See Avesta, Vd. 19. 42; Yt. 14. 29; Pahlavi, Bd. 14. 12; 24. 13; 18. 3; Zsp. 22. 4; and cf. Jackson, *Persia*, p. 9.

⁴ See, for example, Wishard, *Twenty Years in Persia*, pp. 262-263, New York, 1904.

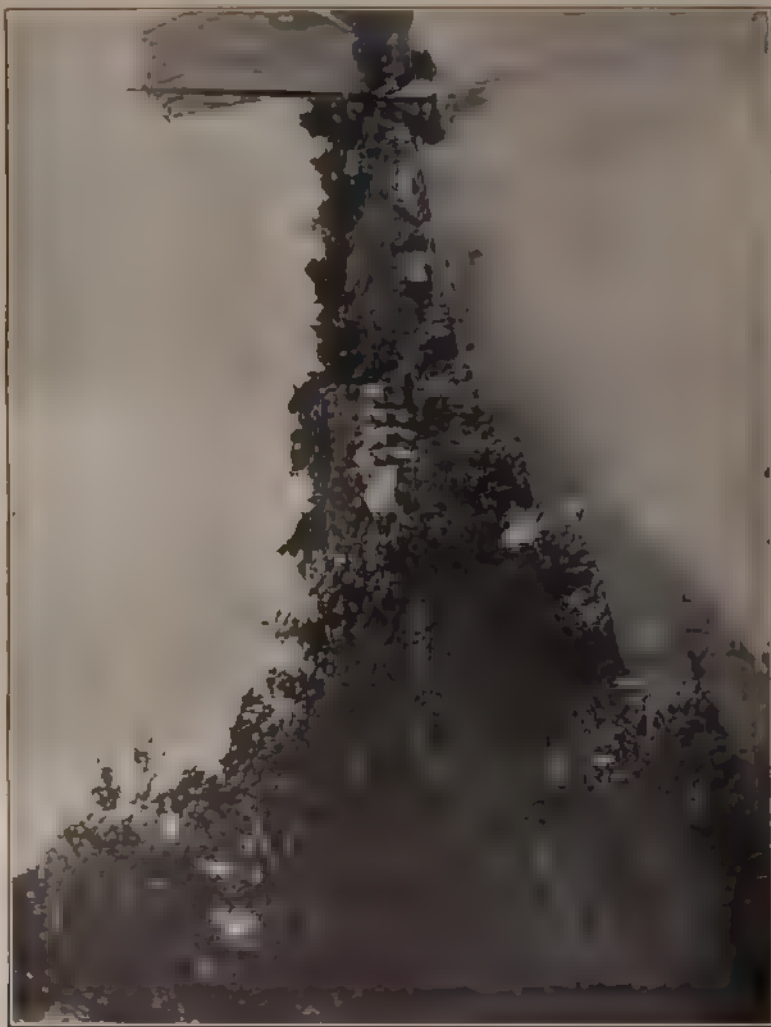
⁵ At Lankuran is laid the scene of the Persian play 'Vizier of Lankuran,' translated by Haggard and Le Strange (London, 1882).

The rough sea that came up as the sun went down was ominous, and the stormy night proved to be the forerunner of a difficult landing next morning at Anzali (also spelled Enzeli), the port of northern Persia for Teheran. It sometimes happens that the waves are so high that the steamer cannot cross the dangerous bar near Anzali, but must return to Baku, thus losing a week, or else must wait for favorable weather to allow her to reach the pier. On this particular occasion we were obliged to anchor outside the roadstead, amid high waves, and to make the difficult transfer to a Persian scow that came tossing alongside and conveyed us to a steam launch which plungingly carried us over the shallow bar and brought the ship's passengers safely into the quiet haven. A summer-palace of the Shah stands on the shore among large gardens, occupied by soldiery when last I saw it, and surrounded by official buildings and the custom-house; but, beyond being a port town, Anzali has little of interest to offer to the visitor.

The formalities of a Persian custom-house seem child's play to one familiar with the official examinations on the pier in New York; we were quickly 'passed' and were soon proceeding by boat, a huge yawl rowed by six Persians, across the bay of Murdab, or 'Deadwater,' into the lagoons that lead up to Piri Bazar and Rasht.¹

This is the more picturesque way of going, as the banks of the creek for several miles are lined with tropical vegetation, past which the rude craft smoothly glides; while the dull chant of the rowers, marking rhythmic time to the dip of their oars, or their voices calling in strange cries to the coolie that pulls the tow-line on the bank whenever a difficult bend of the river must be rounded, give a touch of music that is answered by the sharp whir of some water bird, startled into flight by the boat's approach. An easier way to make the journey to Rasht is by carriage along the now well-constructed road direct from Anzali. Convolvuli, or morning-glories (the Persians also have the

¹ I have spoken of Piri Bazar and Rasht in *Persia Past and Present*, p. 445.



TOWING ALONG THE BANKS OF THE LAGOON FROM ANZALI TO RASHT

equivalent of the latter name) line the way; a fox starts out of the thicket, showing how unexpected was the intrusion into his domain; the thatched dwellings that are typical of Gilan announce that we are approaching the district where the rice-workers dwell; and the bar of a toll-gate tells that the road is in the hands of Russian collectors.

A hearty welcome awaited us at Rasht, where I found the British Vice-Consul, Mr. H. L. Rabino, whom it has been my pleasant privilege to visit on each journey to Persia. A dinner party does not count as a specially noteworthy incident in Europe or America; but a dinner party in Persia, when one has roughed it on the road for days or is to rough it for weeks to come, lingers in memory as a special occasion on which to look back.

I may be allowed to digress here, so as to describe a two days' journey through the Province of Gilan to the town of Lahijan. I knew that there was a shrine there, which is said to have been dedicated in olden times to the worship of Ormazd, and I was, therefore, naturally most anxious to visit the place. The preparations for such an outing involved no slight activity on the part of the servants as well as ourselves, with renewed visits to the bazaars in order to purchase the needed paraphernalia, for traveling off the route or on the route in Persia means always much ado. But all was ultimately made ready for an early start not long after the sun was up.

As we rode out through Rasht into the country, I was struck by the wan cheeks of the children, which showed the searing effect of the fever that ever prevails in this region, where the mountains precipitate the moisture from the Caspian, and turn these low-lying lands into a hotbed of miasma in summer. Yet this note of unpleasant impression was soon turned into harmony by the singing of the birds, for the *bulbul* was ringing out its nightingale strains, and the *hudhud*, or hoopoo, perched on some vine-clad stump amid the semi-tropical vegetation, told with a gentle plaintiveness how it served King Solomon as a messenger of love in his wooing of Bilkis, the Queen of Sheba,

and how it had been rewarded by the monarch with the crested crown it ever wears as a souvenir of its successful mission.

The bridge over a little river whose mournful name means the 'Dead Bride' awakened fancy enough to appreciate the various legends connected with it, one of which told how she had been swept away by the stream when returning at the head of her wedding procession; but brighter associations were ranged about the stream of Nau-Rud, where in bygone days a kindly old woman, with winning smile, used to sell eggs to the wayfarers as they crossed the bridge, so that memories of her genial spirit still live in the name of Murghānah Purd, 'Hen's Egg Bridge.'

During the whole ride we had been passing through field after field of rice, flooded in water to the depth of a foot or more, and forming a very cesspool of malaria. Here the wretched peasants labor ankle-deep in the miry water day after day during the planting and harvesting season of this staple, which gives them their slender subsistence. In every direction were to be seen women at work the livelong day, their red cotton garments, not skirts, tucked up like trousers as they stooped to weed or transplant the young rice-shoots in the filthy mire, while the men plowed up the wet ooze with rude bullock-drawn plows. According to most accounts the moral status of this miserable folk is as degraded as their low means of livelihood. No wonder is it that the children look sickly and puny, when they are said to be brought up from babyhood on doses of opium, administered to bring sleep while the mother labors in the dank fields, or while the father may be wasting his paltry earnings in the tea-house, the Persian substitute for the saloon, generally accompanied by facilities for the use of tobacco and opium. Sometimes it happens that the joint winnings of the household are swept away when the swollen streams break the dikes of the rice-fields, rushing over a wide area, and utterly destroying the crops, as we witnessed that very day.



BAZAR OF KUCHIK ISFAHAN



PEASANTS AT WORK IN THE RICE FIELDS



CROSSING THE SAFIG RUD



A MOUNTAIN LAKE NEAR LAHIJAN

The other chief means of livelihood and main source of income is the cultivation of the silkworm, for which Gilan is noted. Sericulture is one of the most important industries in Persia for the export trade.¹ The mulberry tree, on which the worms feed, flourishes in Gilan; and the bombyces, after having been gathered on the leaves, are placed under high thatched sheds, to whose raised floor we climbed on a rough ladder to behold a writhing mass crawling to devour the tender shoots or preparing to wind their shrouding sheet of the cocoon from which the rich silk is spun. All the region through which we were traveling was busy with silk dealers, French, Armenian, Greek, and other European buyers, who come to Gilan during the cocoon season and purchase for transport abroad. Even a small town like Kuchik Isfahan, 'Little Isfahan,' through which we had just passed, finds trade lively when this time comes, and the latest quotations in cocoon prices are discussed in the small bazar with an interest parallel to that in the Western markets.

The heavy rains had turned the 'road' into the usual slough that one becomes familiar with in Persia, and the horses floundered through deep mire. The absence of camels all the way was noticeable, if not surprising, since donkeys and mules can plow more successfully, though belly-deep, through such tracts. Shortly before noon came the difficult transfer across the Safid Rud, or 'White River,' the largest stream in Persia, whose current was swollen far beyond measure between the flatlands of Rashtabad and the little village of Kisum on the opposite side. Horses, baggage, and all were placed on board a crude boat, whose leaky planks and primitive oars of board looked ill-qualified to battle with the swift tide. The whirlpool eddies carried us far down the stream, but we reached the shore without accident and rode up the steep banks that were tottering in places where the torrent had swept away their edge.

¹ See the comprehensive work, with Rabino, *L'Industrie sérícicole en Perse*, valuable statistics, by Lafont and pp. 1-155, Montpellier, 1910.

Our hearts were touched when we came to a narrow point near the edge, where a path led by an old tree. There, cowering, stood a pitiable wretch, well-nigh unto death from leprosy—an outcast from the folk. The cripple who begged alms at 'the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful,' or the leper of Leviticus crying 'unclean, unclean,' could not have presented a more pathetic sight. I still can hear the voice that came in raucous gasps from the hoarse throat and wasted chest—'a bit, a bit, for charity'—*an'ām, an'ām*—as he pleaded for food. One of the coins, dropped into the now fingerless palm, was perhaps larger than had been wont, and it fell on the ground; but the bleared eye saw where it rolled, and light seemed to come into the dull orb. We were glad to be able to bestow this trifle of comfort, but for a while we rode along in revery with heavy hearts, until roused at last by the sight of the old tomb of a king of Lahijan, Sa'id Hasan Kia, who lived in the sixteenth century. I could only hope that he met with a happier end than Karib, who had been chosen king of Lahijan (about 1635) during a revolt of its people against Shah Safi. The Shah cruelly ordered horseshoes to be nailed upon the unfortunate rebel's feet; and, after allowing him to suffer in agony for a few days, then shot him to death with arrows, discharging the first missile with his own hand.¹

Lahijan (Pers. *Lāhījān*) was described by the Arab-Persian geographers five or six centuries ago as 'an important town, the chief place of the Province of Gilan, with a warm climate, and territory well watered by streams from the neighboring mountains; it manufactures the best silk in the country and produces rice, oranges, and shaddocks.'² The mountains indeed looked green with verdure, as we saw them, unlike the bleak treeless heights of most mountains in Persia; and the bazars seemed flourishing, in contrast to the time when Fraser, in 1833, found

¹ See Hanway, *Caspian Sea*, 1. 524.

de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 503; and cf.

² See Mustaufi (14th century), *Nuzhat al-Kulūb*, quoted by Barbier

Abu 'l-Fida (14th century), cited by Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, p. 174.



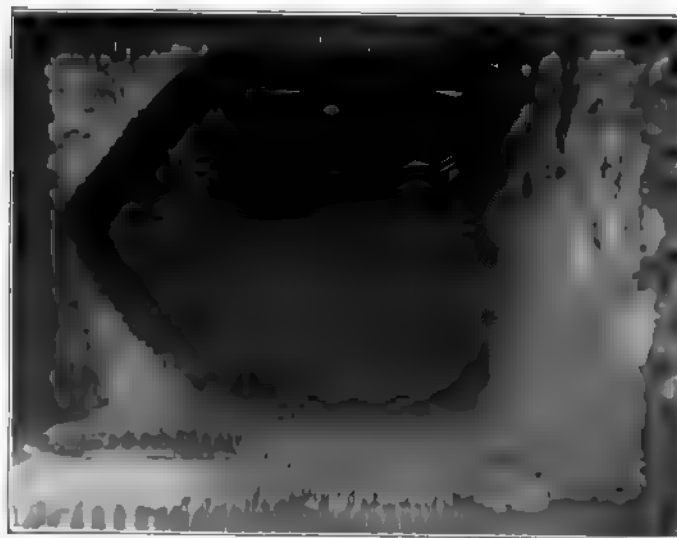
BRINGING THE SILK COCOONS TO THE DRYING-SHEDS



SORTING THE COCOONS



MOSQUE ADJOINING THE GABE ARCH



THE CHAMBER OF THE TAK-I QADIR OR ARCH OF
THE FIRE-WORSHIPPERS

the town devastated by plague, with its population of fifteen thousand shrunk to a paltry number, its houses in ruins, weeds in the streets, and grass in the shops.¹ Fraser's prophecy, that the silk trade would repopulate it, has been well fulfilled, and the merchants were doing a brisk trade; but the idle urchins, struck by our Western garb, found sport in following us around the town with jests and jeers, until suddenly their tone changed and they fell back as we reached the Governor's House to pay our respects to that dignitary. A welcome with Persian ceremony and genial hospitality was here in store for us, and an hour passed, with tea and cigarettes, as we chatted upon travel and affairs of state, the governor paying a return visit in the evening, with due formality in a carriage and span, accompanied by mounted outriders and footmen.

The aim of my pilgrimage had yet to be accomplished, so next morning, in proper fashion, I went on foot with a guide to the 'Gabr Arch,' *Tāk-i Gabr*, which is ascribed by local tradition to the ancient days when the sacred fire of Zoroaster had not been quenched by the followers of Muhammad. The entrance to its vaulted chamber is a low arched alleyway of stone, whose half dozen bows, with somewhat pointed tops, are just high enough to be easily touched by the hand. The shrine itself is about eight feet square and nine feet high, built of rather small bricks; but the style of the structure looks Sasanian, even if some modern Persian inscriptions mark the walls. The sanctuary now forms a part of a Muhammadan mosque and its precincts, and it seemed to me odd to see the shrine that was hallowed by the older faith now sanctified by the rival creed, though a kindred circumstance has already been spoken of in connection with the one-time Christian edifice of Saint Sofia at Constantinople.

After this interesting excursion I found the horses already saddled and in waiting as I returned to our rest-house, which adjoined a silk factory; and away we galloped at good speed so as to reach Rasht again before nightfall.

¹ Fraser, *Winter's Journey*, 2. 487; Spiegel, *Erān. Alt.* 1. 77.

CHAPTER VII

ALONG THE HIGHWAY TO THE SHAH'S CAPITAL

'You must rise with the sun and ride with the same,
Until the next morning he riseth again.'

—OLD ENGLISH BALLADS, *King John and the Abbot*, 23.

ON to Teheran was our next stage, and the idea of revisiting the Shah's capital, to which I was again to return still later, lent a keen zest to the journey of two hundred miles or more that separate Rasht from the metropolis. The highway now used was constructed by foreign enterprise and is under the control of the Russian Road Company, which runs carriages that make the trip in about forty-eight hours — a vast improvement on the old days of the saddle; and it is believed that the Company will some time supplant these vehicles by a good trolley or automobile service, and eventually by railway trains.

My first transit over the route had been made in the opposite direction, three years before. On the present journey, and again on the third, in 1910, I noticed signs of the new régime in Persia, of which the Constitution and the National Assembly, or Parliament, are the outward manifestation. A telephone system had been established along the line of the road, and the *nā'ib*, or officer in charge of the post-route, announced at each stage the arrival and departure of the wagon and gave directions to have the horses ready at the next. By a happy chance I found that the manager of the route was a Zoroastrian, as was also his clerk, and the recitation of a few passages from the sacred text of the Avesta proved a wonderful open sesame to attention, so that orders were issued to expedite the changes of relays in every way possible. The drive was accomplished the last time in forty-three hours, though this will be, of course,



ON THE ROAD BETWEEN RASHT AND LAHIJAN



THE BAZAR AT LAHIJAN

much reduced when electricity and steam are at last brought into use.

On our second trip, however, we were following in the trail of the post, which had gone on just ahead ; and as a consequence we were delayed eight hours for horses at the stupid station of Gūdūn or Gōdōn (sometimes jestingly called 'Go-down' by the English), a few miles beyond Rasht, whose rice-fields and thatch-canopied huts we had left in the afternoon. But the evening air was pleasant, and the sky beautifully clear and starlit, while the nightingales' trill, which one learns to love in Persia, gave a soft tremor to the atmosphere. The high-pitched chant of a Mullah intoning the Kuran chimed in with a certain harmony ; but suddenly the melody was broken by the hoarse croaking of a hundred frogs in a neighboring pool. This reminded me of an anecdote told of the Persian mystic, Jalal ad-Din Rumi, who lived in the thirteenth century. On one occasion he was expounding his veiled and exalted doctrines to a throng of absorbed listeners gathered near the bank of a shady pond, when unexpectedly the discordant croak and gurgling chug of a band of frogs interrupted the discourse. Gravely approaching the marge, he is said to have bidden the frogs be still. Instantly silence reigned and the sage continued his sermon, undisturbed to the end. He then bade the croakers resume their concert again, which they lustily did, and have continued ever since.¹ Just now, unfortunately, we missed Jalal's voice to silence the noisy crew, so that we were forced to listen resignedly to the jarring antiphony of frogs and priest until sleep overcame both them and ourselves, and we sank into the heavy slumber of exhaustion.

The great bells of the camels were soon donging, and the rasping bray of the donkeys, mingled with the calls of their drivers, announced that the caravans were already on the road. Forth we issued into the dark and drove briskly along till the shafts of the spears of dawn lifted the flaps of night's tent to

¹ See Redhouse, *Mesnevī of Jelālu-'d-dīn Rūmī*, introd. p. 62, London, 1881.

let in the day, and the sun burst in splendor over the mountains of Alburz, flooding the valleys with gold, and silvering the broad stream of the Safid Rud, as it rolled in winding current toward the Caspian.

A few hours more, and we were far on our way, amid the olive trees of Rudbar. A troop of camels, I remember, had got into hopeless confusion at a bend in the road. If there is anything that can be unruly and exasperating it is the camel — ‘the Gawd-forsaken *oont!* — the hairy scary *oont!*’ — who ‘blocked the ’ole division from the rear-guard to the front.’¹ The caravan-leader and his fellows were making frantic efforts to bring the train of ungainly beasts into order again. Shouts, cries, yells, whacks, kicks, punches, and strange language, understood of camels, filled the air. *Shutrhā padar-i man dar āvurdand; shutrhā padar-i man sūzāndand!* — yelled the leader in furious rage. ‘What is that?’ I asked, for I did not catch all the words that came with a volubility that could be produced only by a congestion of oaths. ‘Those camels have dug up his dead father and are burning him!’ replied the guide. As ‘son of a burned father’ is one of the worst curses in Persian, it was not difficult to imagine from what sulfurous place these particular camels were supposed to have gotten their brimstone. To say the least, there is a picturesqueness in Persian profanity.

The noble scenery as we climbed slowly skyward over the rocky heights of the Kharzan Pass² made us forget the dizzy altitude and the precipitous mass of rocks over whose ledge many a pack-animal with its driver has fallen to destruction. As the journey proceeded, halt after halt was made for change of horses at the different stations, one much like the other, with lazy idlers, beggars, dogs, and chickens, all equally in evidence as we drew up at the mud hut adjoining the stables. The most comfortable, or rather least uncomfortable, post-house on the first half of the journey is the well built *chāpār-ki.ānah* of

¹ Cf. Kipling, *Barrack Room Ballads*. ² See Jackson, *Persia*, pp. 444–445.



VIEW OF THE SAFID R'D, OR WHITE RIVER



AT A CHAI-KHANAH, OR TEA-HOUSE, ON THE ROAD



RELAY STATION AT UZ-BASHI BETWEEN RASHT AND KAZVIN

Uiz-bashi. Here we had a chance for forty winks — not more, as we were making haste and had promptly to resume our places in the jolting, rickety diligence. Next afternoon came a welcome sight—the snowy cap of Mount Damavand glistening aloft, nearly twenty thousand feet above us, and flashing back a blaze of light from its crystal crown over the green tops of an intervening row of lesser peaks, to tell us we were nearing Kazvin.

Kazvin, with its sixty thousand or more of inhabitants, looked familiar and seemed practically unchanged in appearance; the glazed tiles of the gateway at the entrance of the town shone with the same lustre as before; the streets were about as dirty, the bazars as busy, and the shops as full as when I first saw them.¹ The next time I visited the city I found a regiment of Russian soldiers stationed in the garrison, and I wondered how long their stay might be prolonged.

From Kazvin to the capital is a journey of about ninety-six miles, or sixteen hours and more if no lengthy stops be made; and the road, after leaving the mountains, runs mostly over a level stretch of elevated country. The number of caravans, as we observed, became ever greater; the signs of life ever more active as we drew nearer to the chief center of Persian life; and on the following morning we were passing beneath the high gates of Teheran, the city now of a Constitution and a National Assembly.

¹ See Jackson, *Persia*, pp. 403–404.

CHAPTER VIII

TEHERAN AND A NEWER PERSIA

‘The old order changeth, yielding place to new.’

—TENNYSON, *Passing of Arthur*.

To come back to Teheran seemed like paying a visit home — the streets, the squares, the people, all seemed like old-time friends to greet; and the welcome was a kindly one. Having elsewhere described the main features of the capital in connection with my visit of 1903,¹ I shall not enter again into details, but shall mention some of the signs of progress that seemed marked in 1907 and 1910.

One of the first evidences of advance, which had been noticed along the road even before drawing near the city, was the increase in the number of wheeled vehicles for use in the transportation of goods, instead of the employment of pack-animals and camels. In this manner transit is immeasurably lightened where the roads are good. In reaching the city gate it seemed novel, and Russian rather than Persian, to have a sentry demand of each incomer his name and address, and his whence and whither, for report to the police and military authorities. Yet it must be remembered that Teheran had been under martial rule during the disturbances, and that those ancient ‘laws of the Medes and Persians,’ which knew no change, had at last succumbed to innovation and the establishment of a new régime. In short, we were in the Land of the Parliament.

It has sometimes been thought surprising that Persia, the synonym of the abiding East, should be an Asiatic pioneer in adopting a Constitution, for we are likely to forget that Herodotus once

¹ See Jackson, *Persia*, pp. 418–427.



THE GARDEN OF KAROL

said, 'The Persians, of all nations, are the most ready to adopt foreign customs.'¹ The story of how the Constitution was granted, and of how the old order gave place to the new, is proof enough. The narrative of events during the past four or five years is more or less familiar to every reader of the newspapers, and is now so admirably told in a book by my friend, Professor Edward G. Browne, just received after a part of this chapter was written, that I may compress my outline into the briefest summary of the main occurrences.² Iran has known enlightened rulers and strong administrators many times in its long history from the Golden Age of Jamshid to the late Age of Steel under Nasir ad-Din Shah. This latter monarch, the great-grandfather of the present youthful Shah, ruled for nearly fifty years with a firm, often arbitrary, but generally liberal hand until his reign was brought to an abrupt end on the eve of his jubilee, May 1, 1896, by the shot of an assassin.³ Yet even in his day there were troubles, and a Grand Vizir paid the penalty of death for ideas that were held to be too liberal.⁴ In 1891, moreover, Persia became saddled with a national debt through an ill-advised scheme which had granted, in the previous year, a tobacco monopoly to an English company. The voice of the people was heard for the first time, for they rose in riot; the concession was abrogated; but a heavy indemnity, amounting to two and a half million dollars, had to be paid to those who had received the grant. The problem now became one of money — that greatest common denominator to which most

¹ Herodotus, *History*, 1. 135, ξεινικά δὲ νόμια Πέρσαι προσέονται ἀνδρῶν μάλιστα. He is speaking, not of their manner of dress alone, but of their tendency in general to adopt ideas from foreign peoples.

² See Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*, Cambridge, 1910.

³ Although there is a unanimity of opinion in regard to the iron firmness with which Nasir ad-Din ruled, there

is a marked divergence in regard to a favorable or unfavorable estimate of his reign. A generally favorable verdict is given by Wishard, *Twenty Years in Persia*, pp. 303-305. A directly opposite judgment, called forth especially by the closing years of his reign, is given by Browne, *Persian Revolution*, pp. xx. 32, 33.

⁴ Cf. Wishard, *op. cit.* pp. 330-331.

things seem to be reducible. 'Thus bad begins, but worse remains behind' — said Hamlet once ; and so it proved in the decade that followed (1896-1907), occupied by the reign of Shah Muzaffar ad-Din. The depleted state of the treasury, the general downward trend of affairs, and the ever growing discontent of the people caused their leaders to rise — ecclesiastical heads among them — and demand reforms and the rights of a Constitution, so that the people should have a real share in acts of the government. This concession was finally granted on August 5, 1906, by the monarch, already sick unto death ; the Parliament was formally inaugurated a fortnight later ; and the Western world beheld the surprising innovation of a National Assembly entering upon its deliberations at Teheran on October 7 of the same year. What would Cyrus, Darius, or Xerxes have said ; what might Chosroes and Shah Abbas have exclaimed, if they had witnessed this mighty revolution, effected almost without bloodshed by the people's hands !

The rest of the story is too recent to need to be related in detail.¹ Three months later, on January 7, 1907, Muzaffar ad-Din, 'King of Kings, rested with his fathers' — as the official proclamation stated in announcing his death. The hopes and the fears of the nation were now centered upon his son, Muhammad Ali Mirza, who was crowned Shah two weeks afterwards, at the age of thirty-five. Never favorable to the idea of a Parliament, though he had signed the Constitution before his father's death, he came into conflict with the National Assembly almost immediately. The constant clashes that ensued between the Crown and the Deputies ultimately resulted in the Shah's regiment of Cossacks bombarding the Parliament building, in riot and bloodshed on both sides, and in the spirited revolution that first forced Muhammad Ali to abdicate and then formally deposed him, July 16, 1909, after a troublous reign of two years and seven months. His son,

¹ Especially as I may now refer to the work by Professor Browne, already cited.

Sultan Ahmad Riza, the Crown Prince, a lad of eleven years (born January 20, 1898), was selected to mount the Peacock Throne in his stead on July 20, 1909, and now rules Iran under the guidance of a regent.¹

It is not necessary to record in these pages any memoranda of the various uprisings that occurred in other cities of the kingdom or in the outlying districts during the time when the reform movement was winning its way. The clouds seem now to be breaking, and brighter rays to be gilding the horizon to bring back once more some of the older days of glory in the Province of the Sun, if only unity prevail within, and moral and financial support be lent from without to aid this land of a newer régime.²

But I must return to our impressions and experiences, omitting an account of a roam again over the ruins of the ancient city of Rai³; nor can I more than mention several formal visits to officials of the Persian State, whose distinguished courtesy I wish to recognize, as well as to acknowledge the attention received from the Grand Vizir, Atabak Amin as-Sultan, whose assassination in the following September came as a shock to the public.

Through the courtesy of the American Legation, arrangements were made for us during our stay to pay a visit to the Royal Palace and to be presented to Shah Muhammad Ali, who had not then been deposed, but was only recently crowned. The buildings and grounds of the imperial residence cover a considerable area in the heart of the city; and the gardens about the palace, picturesque with their fountains and shaded water-courses, have all the charm that belongs to a *paradise* in the literal sense of that ancient Persian word, which means 'enclosure, park.'

¹ The first regent, Azad al-Malk, died Sept. 22, 1910.

² See Jackson, *Persia*, p. 428-441.

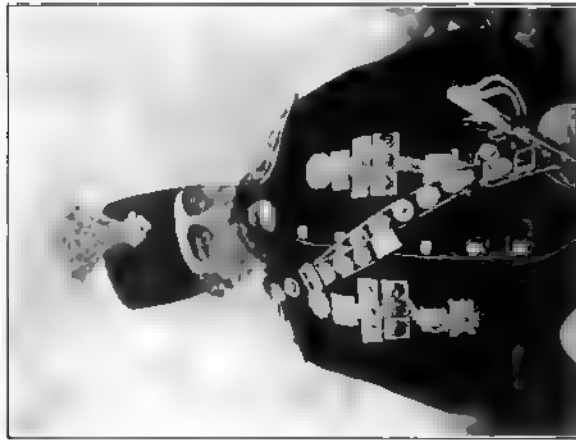
³ As these pages are passing through the press (Sept. 1911), word has been received through the newspapers that

Muhammad Ali Mirza is making an attempt to regain his throne and has entered Persia at the head of an armed force by way of Astrabad and Semnan. It would be difficult to forecast the issue of this move.

At the foot of the stairway of the main hall, into which our party was formally ushered, stood a heavy easel bearing a large portrait of the Shah in all his coronation regalia. Near by was hanging a large Persian rug, so modern in design as to include some of the presidents of the United States among the dignitaries whose portraits formed the pattern.¹ The richly carpeted corridors and stately halls, through which we were conducted, were resplendent with mirrors, and the walls of some were gorgeously blazing with tiny facets of coruscating glass inlaid in panels of plaster of Paris, a style of decorative design much admired by the Persians. Some were even brilliant with jeweled ornament, or with heavily embossed furniture; yet all that glittered was not gold, and there was much that was tinsel and tawdry. At the top of one of the fine staircases, for instance, we noticed as an adornment a frame filled with an immense assortment of fish-hooks — a business advertisement of some foreign firm dealing in angler's goods. I have since been told — for I missed visiting Court under the Regency, on my third journey — that much of the trash that had found its way into the palace, from time to time, has now been removed so as to leave the Shah's residence more in keeping with his royal dignity.

The chief attraction in the palace, however, was the great Coronation Room, Parisian rather than Persian in its style. Its treasures are many, but among them my eye was attracted by the remains of the largest meteoric stone in the world. Only half of the meteorite, however, is on exhibition, for the stone has been sawed in two; the other half is now preserved somewhere in America, having been exchanged, I was told, for an insignificant piece of crystal, which stands near the portion that was retained. There was something munificent in the royal generosity that sanctioned such an exchange as an act of courtesy to this side of the Atlantic, and the graceful favor deserves its mention here.

¹ I believe this rug had been on exhibition at the World's Fair in Chicago or at the Exposition at St. Louis.



MUZAFFAR AD-DIN SHAH
(1886-1907)



THE YOUNG SHAH — SULTAN AHMAD RIZA
(crowned July 20, 1908)



MUHAMMAD ALI SHAH
(1907 — deposed July 16, 1909)



REFUGEES AT THE BRITISH LEGATION IN TEHERAN DEMANDING A
CONSTITUTION FROM THE SHAH July August, 1906



REVOLUTIONISTS FROM THE PROVINCES ON THEIR WAY TO TEHERAN

In this grand hall our interest was naturally centered upon the *Takht-i Tā'ūs*, or Peacock Throne, which each Shah mounts when being crowned King of Kings or when holding state levees for foreign emissaries. The royal seat stands at the farther end of the great salon, and is claimed to be the famous throne built by Shah Jahan, the Moghul emperor of India, in the eighth year of his reign, 1634 A.D., but carried away as a trophy by the Persian conqueror Nadir Shah, when he overran northern Hindustan in 1749. The superb white marble base, or platform, on which the throne formerly stood is still shown in the Moghul court at Delhi, where I had seen it when traveling in India in 1901 and again in 1911.¹ The throne itself, which now graces the audience hall of the Persian Shahan-Shah, or 'King of Kings,' is a magnificent work of art, sumptuous in the extreme. It is a jeweled platform, sometimes compared to a 'field bed,' about four feet high and five by eight feet in area, resting on six massive legs with four additional supports, and mounted by a double step. A heavy railing, decorated with metal knobs and finials, emboxes the rug-bedecked seat, and rises at the rear to form an elevated back against which the Shah sits in Oriental fashion, supported by a bolster-cushion and surrounded by pillows. The rich incrustation of jewels, the highly ornate character of the lacquer work, and the delicacy of the traceries and arabesque designs impart to the throne an exquisiteness of finish and beauty that is quite its own. Lord Curzon's description is so excellent that I quote it, though venturing to draw attention to a slight inaccuracy.

'The entire fabric is overlaid with a plating of gold, which is exquisitely chiselled and enamelled, and is absolutely incrustated with precious stones among which rubies and emeralds are the most prominent. Seven² be-

¹ This base resembles a huge table, and stands nearly waist-high. One of the pedestals which supported it is now to be seen in the Metropolitan Museum, in New York City, having been acquired by purchase in 1908.

² Three different photographs which are accessible to me show that there are *six* legs and *four* supports. Two of these supports are on either side of the steps; the other two sustain respectively the middle and the back part of the flooring of the throne.

jewelled legs sustain the platform, access to which is gained by two steps, decorated with salamanders. An elegant balustrade containing inscriptions in panels runs round, and the lofty back, which is one mass of gems, rises to a point in the centre whereupon is fixed a circular star of diamonds, with scintillating rays, made to revolve by a piece of mechanism at the back. On either side of the star are two bejewelled birds, perched on the edges of the back-frame, and facing each other.¹

The account which the French jeweler and traveler Tavernier gave of the Peacock Throne of the Moghuls, when he saw it at Delhi in the court of Shah Jahan's son, Aurangzib, in 1665, is important to cite in full because of the question raised by Lord Curzon as to whether the Teheran throne is really the one that was taken from the Moghul capital.² Tavernier's description shows the technical eye of the jeweler and reads as follows:³—

'It should be stated that the Great Mogul has seven magnificent thrones, one wholly covered with diamonds, the others with rubies, emeralds, and pearls.

'The principal throne, which is placed in the hall of the first court, is nearly of the form and size of our camp beds⁴; that is to say, it is about 6 feet long and 4 wide. Upon the four feet,⁵ which are very massive, and from 20 to 25 inches high,⁶ are fixed the four bars which support the base of the throne, and upon these bars are ranged twelve columns, which sustain the canopy on three sides, there not being any on that which faces the court. Both the feet and the bars, which are more than 18 inches long, are covered with gold inlaid and enriched with numerous diamonds, rubies, and emeralds. In the middle of each bar there is a large *balass* ruby,⁷ cut *en cabuchon*, with four emeralds round it, which

¹ Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 318-319.

² Tavernier was at Aurangzib's court at Jahanabad (New Delhi) for two months, Sept. 1-Nov. 1, 1665.

³ Tavernier, *Travels in India, translated from the original French edition of 1676*, by V. Ball, London, 1889, 1. 381-385. For the French edition see Tavernier, *Voyages en Turquie, en Perse, et aux Indes*, 2. 278-280, Paris, 1676-1678, and compare the early English version, Tavernier, *Travels through Turkey and Persia to the In-*

dies, pt. 2, bk. 2, ch. 8, pp. 122-123, London, 1684. The early English version omits a number of the details which are given in the original French and are restored in Ball's recent translation, herewith presented.

⁴ The French original has 'le grandeur de nos lits de camp.'

⁵ Observe the number four (not six).

⁶ The French has 'vingt à vingt-cinq pouces de haut.'

⁷ That is, from the mines of Badakhshan in Central Asia.

form a square cross. Next in succession, from one side to the other along the length of the bars, there are similar crosses, arranged so that in one the ruby is in the middle of four emeralds, and in another the emerald is in the middle, and four *balass* rubies surround it. The emeralds are table-cut, and the intervals between the rubies and emeralds are covered with diamonds, the largest of which do not exceed 10 or 12 carats in weight, all being showy stones, but very flat. There are also in some parts pearls set in gold, and upon one of the longer sides of the throne there are four steps to ascend it.¹

‘Of the three cushions or pillows, which are upon the throne, that which is placed behind the King’s back is large and round like one of our bolsters, and the two others that are placed at his sides are flat. There is to be seen, moreover, a sword suspended from this throne, a mace, a round shield, a bow and quiver with arrows; and all these weapons, as also the cushions and steps, both of this throne and the other six, are covered over with stones which match those with which each of the thrones is respectively enriched.²

‘I counted the large *balass* rubies on the great throne, and there were about 108, all *cabuchons*, the least of which weighs 100 carats, but there are some which weigh apparently 200 or more. As for the emeralds, there are plenty of good colour, but they have many flaws; the largest may weigh 60 carats, and the least 30 carats. I counted about one hundred and sixteen (116); thus there are more emeralds than rubies.

‘The underside of the canopy is covered with diamonds and pearls, with a fringe of pearls all round, and above the canopy, which is a quadrangular-shaped dome, there is to be seen a peacock with elevated tail made of blue sapphires and other coloured stones, the body being of gold inlaid with precious stones, having a large ruby in front of the breast, from whence hangs a pear-shaped pearl of 50 carats or thereabouts, and of a somewhat yellow water. On both sides of the peacock there is a large bouquet of the same height as the bird, and consisting of many kinds of flowers made of gold inlaid with precious stones. On the side of the throne which is opposite the court there is to be seen a jewel consisting of a diamond of from 80 to 90 carats weight, with rubies and emeralds round it, and when the King is seated he has this jewel in full view. But that which in my opinion is the most costly thing about this magnificent throne is that the twelve columns supporting the canopy are surrounded with beautiful rows of pearls, which are round and of fine water, and weigh from 6 to 10

¹ This number should be noted. is given by Tavernier, *Travels*, tr.

² A briefer general description of Ball, 1. 99.
the throne, as the king’s seat at levees,

carats each. At 4 feet distance from the throne there are fixed, on either side, two umbrellas, the sticks of which, for 7 or 8 feet in height, are covered with diamonds, rubies, and pearls. These umbrellas are of red velvet, and are embroidered and fringed all around with pearls.

‘This is what I have been able to observe regarding this famous throne, commenced by Tamerlane and completed by Shah Jahan; and those who keep the accounts of the King’s jewels, and of what this great work has cost, have assured me that it amounts to one hundred and seven thousand lakhs of rupees [sic] (i.e. 10,700,000,000) which amount to one hundred and sixty millions five hundred thousand livres of our money (i.e. 160,500,000).’¹

It will be observed in this description that the most gorgeous part of the fabric was the magnificent canopy which contained the peacock that gave its name to the throne.

A less detailed account, apparently drawn in part from ‘recollection,’ is given by François Bernier, who traveled for a time with Tavernier and remained for twelve years at the capital of the Great Moghul in the capacity of court physician. In a letter addressed from Delhi to a friend in France, and dated July 1, 1663 (thus earlier than Tavernier), he writes:² —

‘The throne was supported by six massy feet, said to be of solid gold, sprinkled over with rubies, emeralds, and diamonds. I cannot tell you with accuracy the number or value of this vast collection of precious stones, because no person may approach sufficiently near to reckon them, or judge of their water and clearness; but I can assure you that there is a confusion of diamonds, as well as other jewels, and that the throne, to the best of my recollection, is valued at four *Kourours* of *Roupies* [crores of rupees]. I observed elsewhere that a *Lecque* is one hundred thousand *roupies*, and that a *Kourour* is a hundred *Lecques*, so that the throne is estimated at forty millions of *roupies*, worth sixty millions of livres or thereabouts.’³ It was

¹ Ball has pointed out that there is apparently a clerical error in the numbers of the original text which should read ‘one thousand and seventy lakhs.’ He gives the equivalent in English money as £12,037,500. For other valuations see the following notes.

² Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire in 1656–1668*, translated by Brock and Constable, pp. 268–269, London, 1891.

³ That is, £4,500,000, valuing the rupee at 2s. 3d. at that time. The valuation by Tavernier (as given with Ball’s correction of a clerical error) was £12,037,500; see above. Benjamin, *Persia*, p. 73, New York, 1887, mentions \$13,000,000 as an estimate. Abd al-Hamid, a court historian of Shah Jahan (quoted below), named ‘ten million rupees’ (over £1,000,000). The same sum, ‘one *kror* (10,000,000)



GATEWAY OF THE SHAH'S PALACE AT TEHERAN

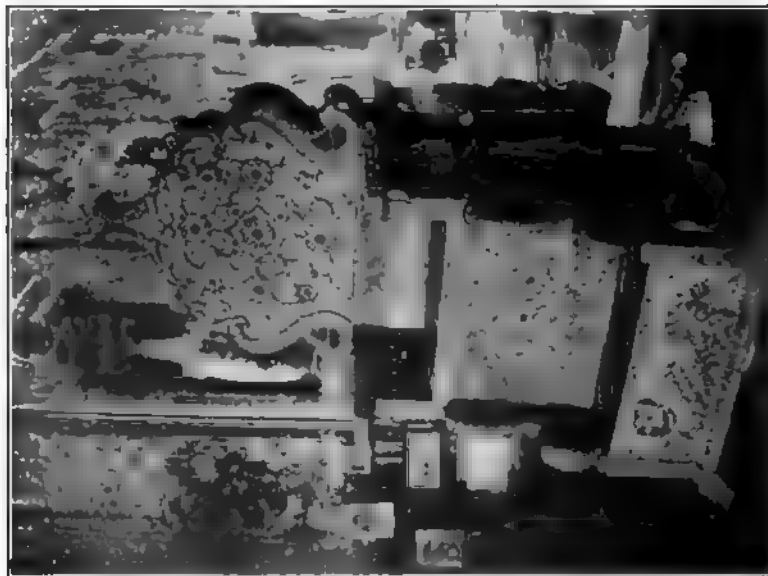


THE THRONE ROOM IN THE SHAH'S PALACE



Also in Indian Picture

SHAH JAHAN HOLDING AN AUDIENCE



THRONE OF FATH ALI SHAH, OR THE CHAIR THRONE

constructed by *Chah-Jehan*, the father of *Aureng-Zebe*, for the purpose of displaying the immense quantity of precious stones accumulated successively in the treasury from the spoils of ancient *Rajas* and *Patans*, and the annual presents to the Monarch, which every *Omah* is bound to make on certain festivals. The construction and workmanship of the throne are not worthy of the materials; but two peacocks, covered with jewels and pearls, are well conceived and executed.¹ They were made by a workman of astonishing powers, a *Frenchman* by birth, named . . . ,² who, after defrauding several of the Princes of *Europe* by means of false gems, which he fabricated with peculiar skill, sought refuge at the *Great Mogol's* court, where he made a fortune.'

Another Frenchman, Jean de Thevenot, who also had traveled with Tavernier and was in India in 1666, speaks of the great value of the throne, though he doubts whether it was begun by Tamerlane, as was claimed.³

'That stately Throne of Massive Gold with its Peacock so much talked of in the Indies, which the Moguls say was begun by Tamerlan, though that be very unlikely: For to whom could King Humayon and his Father have entrusted it in the time of their disasters? Seeing the Spoils of the Patan Kings and other Sovereigns of the

of rupees,' is given in the *Tazkira*, by Anand Ram Mukhlis, historian of the Moghul emperor Muhammad Shah (1739), from whom the throne was taken by Nadir. Another of Muhammad Shah's chroniclers, Muhammad Mushin Sadiki, in his *Jauhar-i Sam-sām* (1739), euphemistically says that the throne was presented to the Persian conqueror: 'His Majesty bestowed on Nadir Shah, with his own munificent hand, as a parting present, the Peacock Throne, in which was set a ruby upwards of a *girik* (three fingers' breadth) in width, and nearly two in length, which was commonly called *khirāj-i 'ālam*, "tribute of the world."' See Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, 8. 89. Similar estimates by others are quoted by Curzon, 1. 318, n. 1. It must be kept in mind that the original estimates all included the

canopy, which was the most costly part of the whole creation.

¹ It will be noticed that Bernier speaks of 'two' peacocks, not one, as the more accurate Tavernier on this subject, and does not mention the canopy. But he speaks of writing from his 'recollection'; while Tavernier was observing as a professional jeweler.

² Constable adds in a footnote (*Travels by Bernier*, p. 269, n. 3, and p. xxxiii): 'Bernier does not tell us his name, but [John] Steuart, in his edition of part of this book [*Bernier's Travels*], Calcutta, 1826, gives it as La Grange. I have not been able to verify this.'

³ Thevenot, *Travels into the Levant; newly done out of the French* by A. Lovell, 3. 42, London, 1687.

Indies, who were overcome by the Mogul Kings, are converted into Jewels and Precious Stones to adorn it, it is said to be worth above twenty Millions of Gold; but who can know the value thereof? since it depends on the Stones that make the Riches as well as the Beauty thereof, whose weight and excellency must be particularly examin'd, if one would judge of their worth, and by consequence, of the value of the Throne.'

Above, when first mentioning the throne, I designedly said that the Takht-i Ta'us is 'claimed' to be the Peacock Throne which was carried off from India by Nadir Shah. Lord Curzon has brought forward strong arguments to show that this seat of sovereignty in the palace at Teheran is not the original throne of the Moghul emperor, but was built for Fath Ali Shah, early in the nineteenth century, when he married a lady of a noble house of Isfahan, this information being received through correspondence with a former Grand Vizir and the Minister for Foreign Affairs (cf. *Persia*, 1. 321). He furthermore points to the statement by Tavernier (already quoted) that the Great Moghul had 'seven thrones,' and to that by Hanway, who reported that Nadir Shah carried off 'nine other thrones' beside the Peacock Throne,¹ so that even this alone would throw doubt on the authority of the Teheran throne as *the* Peacock Throne. He adds, moreover, on the authority of Malcolm, that Nadir was so fond of the real Peacock Throne of India as to have an

¹ Hanway, *Account Brit. Trade Caspian Sea*, 1 ed. 4. 187-188 = 3 ed. 2. 383. The Venetian traveler Manucci, in his account of the Moghul Court under Shah Jahan's son, Aurangzib, in the 17th century, refers to several other thrones besides the Peacock Throne, which belonged to the Emperor of India: 'Aurangzeb was seated on a throne in shape like a peacock—a marvelous piece of work made by King Shahjahan—but he never had the good fortune to sit on it' (2.49). 'The palaces are decked inside and out with high and costly hangings, made by order of Shahjahan along with the throne of which I

have spoken. This is of very great value, and the maker never had the felicity of seating himself upon it. Aurangzeb was the first, who, upon the day of his coronation, had the benefit of ascending this superb seat. It was placed under lofty tents, and he continues to use it on the festival day [New Year's], of which I speak. It is at that time the usage to place on each side of the throne, but a little lower, all the thrones used by the kings of Hindustan who preceded the present monarch' (2. 348). See Niccolao Manucci, *Storia do Mogor, or Mogul India, 1653-1708*, tr. W. Irvine, 2. 49, 348, London, 1907.

exact duplicate made of it, ornamented with gems from his own treasury, thus leaving *two* 'Peacock Thrones' to dispose of.¹ Nadir Shah was murdered in 1747 by a rebel band of Kurds, who had been transplanted to Khurasan; and an old Kurd told Frazer, in 1822, that 'when that king was murdered, and his camp plundered, the peacock throne and the tent of pearls fell into our hands and were torn in pieces and divided on the spot, although our chiefs themselves knew little of their value.'² In this way, if we can trust the Kurd, Lord Curzon believes that 'the real Peacock Throne, or one of the two,' in Nadir Shah's possession disappeared from the scene. The other (as Curzon was informed by his correspondents), whether the facsimile or 'the original throne of Nadir Shah (*i.e.* the survivor of the two facsimiles), was discovered in a broken-down and piece-meal condition by Agha Mohammed Shah, who extracted it along with many other of the conqueror's jewels by brutal torture from his blind grandson, Shah Rukh, at Meshed, and then had the recovered portions of it made up into the throne of modern shape and style, which now stands at the end of the new museum in the palace at Teheran.³ In this chair, therefore, are to be found the sole surviving remnants of the Great Moghul's Peacock Throne.'⁴

While Lord Curzon's arguments are presented with consummate skill, and the statement on the authority of the former Grand Vizir and the Minister for Foreign Affairs seems most convincing, nevertheless there appear to me to be some flaws in the chain of reasoning so as to open the question again for further consideration.

¹ Malcolm, *History of Persia*, 2. 37, referred to by Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 320.

² Fraser, *Narrative of a Journey into Khorasān*, Appendix, p. 43.

³ This throne was locked up in a special part of the treasury, so I did not see it, but I believe it to be represented by the photograph of the chair-like throne which I purchased in Te-

heran. In the palace there is still another throne, the *Takht-i Marmar*, or 'Marble Throne,' described by Curzon, 1. 312-313, and shown in an illustration in the volume by Benjamin, *Persia and the Persians*, p. 222, London, 1887. — A. V. W. J.

⁴ Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 322.

In the first place, so far as argumentation goes, without referring to the canopy of the throne in detail, there appears to be a fallacy in urging as evidence the fact that 'above all there is no peacock,' or that the two birds on the back of the throne are not peacocks (1.320). The birds are certainly not peacocks ; but the descriptions by Tavernier and by Shah Jahan's own chronicler (which I shall cite) distinctly show that the peacock or peacocks were not on the body of the throne, but on the canopy or its supports. Deductions from the figure of the two birds should be eliminated from the testimony in the case, it seems to me.

Second, the assumption that Morier (to whom in certain other respects Curzon ascribes no great accuracy, p. 320, n. 1) stated that the throne 'is said to have cost 100,000 *tomans*' (then about £100,000), appears to give no really valid reason for presuming that the fabric was of quite recent date.

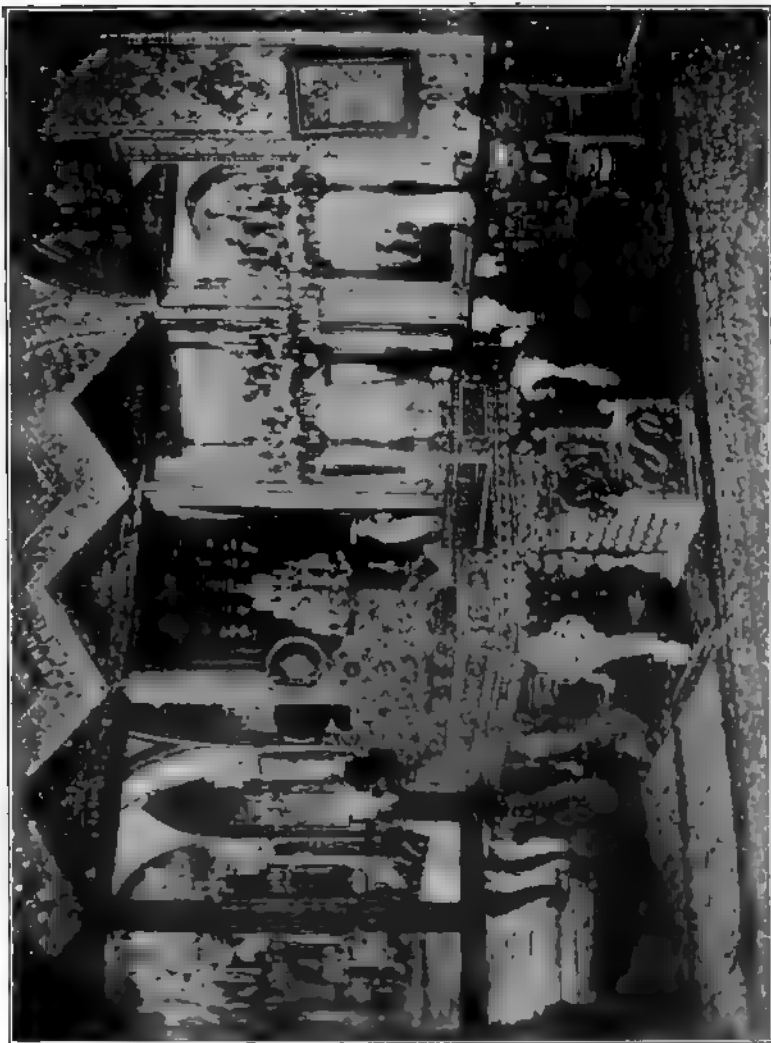
Third, Lord Curzon himself, if differing from the other authorities in regard to the number of supports ('seven legs'), is open to a slight correction on that point, as indicated above in a footnote.

Fourth, I believe, from actual inspection of the throne, that there is a manifest error in the latter part of Curzon's statement (1. 319) that 'there is no trace or sign of a canopy, or of the means by which a vanished canopy could have been added to the existing throne.' But before taking up this point regarding the original canopy, I wish to draw attention to an overlooked description of the Moghul throne by Shah Jahan's court historian.

This passage occurs in the *Pādshāh Nāmah*, or 'Book of the King,' written by Abd al-Hamid, royal annalist to Shah Jahan, and recorded under the eighth year of his reign, 1044 A.H. = 1634 A.D. The excerpt in question, which I had with me when examining the throne, reads as follows :¹ —

'In the course of years many valuable gems had come into the imperial jewel-house, each one of which might serve as an ear-drop for Venus, or as

¹ The translation is from Elliot, *History of India*, 7. 45-46.



[I N T E R N O D I A L I T A T I O N , N. Y.]



form a square cross. Next in succession, from one side to the other along the length of the bars, there are similar crosses, arranged so that in one the ruby is in the middle of four emeralds, and in another the emerald is in the middle, and four *balass* rubies surround it. The emeralds are table-cut, and the intervals between the rubies and emeralds are covered with diamonds, the largest of which do not exceed 10 or 12 carats in weight, all being showy stones, but very flat. There are also in some parts pearls set in gold, and upon one of the longer sides of the throne there are four steps to ascend it.¹

‘Of the three cushions or pillows, which are upon the throne, that which is placed behind the King’s back is large and round like one of our bolsters, and the two others that are placed at his sides are flat. There is to be seen, moreover, a sword suspended from this throne, a mace, a round shield, a bow and quiver with arrows; and all these weapons, as also the cushions and steps, both of this throne and the other six, are covered over with stones which match those with which each of the thrones is respectively enriched.²

‘I counted the large *balass* rubies on the great throne, and there were about 108, all *cabuchons*, the least of which weighs 100 carats, but there are some which weigh apparently 200 or more. As for the emeralds, there are plenty of good colour, but they have many flaws; the largest may weigh 60 carats, and the least 30 carats. I counted about one hundred and sixteen (116); thus there are more emeralds than rubies.

‘The underside of the canopy is covered with diamonds and pearls, with a fringe of pearls all round, and above the canopy, which is a quadrangular-shaped dome, there is to be seen a peacock with elevated tail made of blue sapphires and other coloured stones, the body being of gold inlaid with precious stones, having a large ruby in front of the breast, from whence hangs a pear-shaped pearl of 50 carats or thereabouts, and of a somewhat yellow water. On both sides of the peacock there is a large bouquet of the same height as the bird, and consisting of many kinds of flowers made of gold inlaid with precious stones. On the side of the throne which is opposite the court there is to be seen a jewel consisting of a diamond of from 80 to 90 carats weight, with rubies and emeralds round it, and when the King is seated he has this jewel in full view. But that which in my opinion is the most costly thing about this magnificent throne is that the twelve columns supporting the canopy are surrounded with beautiful rows of pearls, which are round and of fine water, and weigh from 6 to 10

¹ This number should be noted. is given by Tavernier, *Travels*, tr.

² A briefer general description of Ball, 1. 99.
the throne, as the king’s seat at levees,

in letters of green enamel. On his return to Agra, the emperor held a court and sat for the first time upon his throne.'

Now it will be noticed that the general points of the description match well with Tavernier's, particularly in regard to the canopy or its columns, with the decoration of peacocks. This should be borne in mind; for, as Lord Curzon rightly says, no one would ever mistake the two birds on the back of the throne for peacocks. The eminent Viceroy and Chancellor is mistaken, however, if I be allowed to point it out, in saying 'There is no trace or sign . . . of the means by which a vanished canopy could have been added to the existing throne.' I took particular pains to examine the incrustated metal knobs that run round the railing of the throne. They lift out, and the sockets which hold their pins could plainly have been the holes for the 'twelve emerald columns' supporting the canopy, as stated by Abd al-Hamid. The same number ('twelve columns') is given by Tavernier.

I next proceeded to examine the inscriptions on the panels along the railing, which are written in most intricate arabesques, exceedingly hard to read at all in the imperfect light in which I was working. One of the Persian princes was just beginning to help me with the decipherment when word came that the Shah was in the garden and that we were to repair thither to be presented to his Majesty. There remained nothing to do but abandon the antiquarian problem at once, leaving it for some future scholar to take this hint, if worth anything, and to settle one way or the other the present mooted question of the authenticity of the throne. See particularly what is said in the footnote below.¹

¹ I was sorry not to visit the palace on my third journey, but since my return to America I have, with the help of Dr. Yohannan, been examining under a microscope and with the aid of stereopticon lantern projections the inscriptions on three photographs of the Peacock Throne (though unfortunately they are not very distinct in

regard to all the characters), and have been comparing them with the inscriptions found on Lord Curzon's picture of the throne (l. 319), which was reproduced from 'an engraving.' From this comparison, carefully made, it is extremely difficult to believe that the inscriptions in the engraving, from which Lord Curzon's reproduction is

form a square cross. Next in succession, from one side to the other along the length of the bars, there are similar crosses, arranged so that in one the ruby is in the middle of four emeralds, and in another the emerald is in the middle, and four *balass* rubies surround it. The emeralds are table-cut, and the intervals between the rubies and emeralds are covered with diamonds, the largest of which do not exceed 10 or 12 carats in weight, all being showy stones, but very flat. There are also in some parts pearls set in gold, and upon one of the longer sides of the throne there are four steps to ascend it.¹

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² A briefer general description of Ball, 1. 99.
the throne, as the king’s seat at levees,

spatches which he read through heavy eye-glasses, for he was very near-sighted. His body was very thick-set, inclining to obesity; his face was round and full; and his head was surmounted by the usual heavy lambskin cap. His expression wore a passive air that rather conveyed the idea of superciliousness; in fact, I was told that his whole demeanor had changed after he became king, for, while Crown Prince, he had been inclined to be very easy and gracious in his behavior. It must be admitted that there seemed to be little in his bearing that was truly regal or likely to win enthusiasm from his subjects or to inspire admiration in those with whom he came in contact; and though this estimate may be unjust, later events appear to have borne it out. The interview had little of interest beyond the fact that we had been in the royal presence of him who sat on a throne once occupied by mighty kings who, in the days of Persia's glory, had come into clash with Greece and Rome.

After the presentation we withdrew to see the place where the body of the Shah's father, Muzaffar ad-Din, was lying in state. It was on one side of the circular enclosure where the *ta'zieh*, or religious plays, were performed. The catafalque rested on a sort of dais at the head of a broad flight of steps that was strewn with Persian rugs. Heavy hangings and tapestries formed the rich background, and a large picture of the dead monarch hung over his casket. A priestly band of Mullahs were chanting selections from the Kuran, and their voices echoed solemnly back from the silent walls of the enclosure that formed the court where death now held sway. Verily, Muzaffar ad-Din 'rested with his fathers,' where

'Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing
Can touch him further.'

of securing an accurate transcript of all the inscriptions, and if successful I shall publish the results at a later date. — As a possible fifth point I may add that the two bizarre figures in the steps, which Curzon calls sala-

manders, look like the familiar representations of dragons in Mongol art and might thus contribute further evidence in favor of the Moghul origin of the throne.



GATEWAY OF THE SHAH'S PALACE AT TEHRAN



THE THRONE ROOM IN THE SHAH'S PALACE



INCLOSURE WHERE RELIGIOUS PLAYS ARE PRESENTED AND WHERE THE
DEAD SHAH LAY IN STATE



NORTH SIDE OF THE GREAT SQUARE AT TEHERAN, LOOKING TOWARD
THE ALBURZ MOUNTAINS

On both this and the next visit to Teheran I attended a session of the Majlis, or Parliament, for the National Assembly had then been established. The courtesy of the invitation was due to one of its members, Arbab Jamshid, the well-known Zoroastrian banker of Teheran, to whose kindness and hospitality I had been already indebted otherwise.¹

The Majlis building lies near the Sipahsalar Mosque and occupies a part of its grounds. The name *Bahāristān*, 'Place of Spring,' which the precinct bears, seems to be well omened. The edifice was originally erected for quite a different purpose in 1870, but was later taken over by Nasir ad-Din Shah and ultimately appropriated for the uses of the National Assembly. On the afternoon when we saw it, who could have forecast that it would be bombarded by the Shah's Cossacks thirteen months later (June 23, 1908)? The arrangements of the building and the details of parliamentary procedure were then still in embryo, and I noticed the most marked advance when I attended a session three years later. The building which had passed through the fire of shot and shell had risen phoenix-like into a new existence. The simple, squat pulpit of the first presiding officer had been replaced by a handsome desk for the president, while dignified seats, ranged in an amphitheatre, gave suitable accommodations for the deputies, and a gallery extended hospitality to visitors. Admirable dignity and decorum marked the proceedings throughout, and were in keeping with such a detail as the external finish of the main committee-room and the large reception room for visitors, both of which were in excellent taste and reflected credit upon the Zoroastrian custodian, Kai Khusru, to whom the entire task of remodeling the edifice had been intrusted. He showed me traces enough of the storm of lead and steel through which it had passed; and I was interested in learning from other sources that this entire work of reconstruction had been carried out without the slightest imputation of 'graft' or any sugges-

¹ See *Persia Past and Present*, pp. 426-427.

tion that coin had stuck to the fingers of this 'Gabr,' who had faithfully discharged his obligation and had won the unqualified respect of his Mussulman colleagues who had helped him in the task. I mention this as a tribute to the quality of stamina and spirit that is to be found in Iran, and as one of the numerous signs of a real *Persia rediviva*—signs that should command the consideration of foreign nations that may lend a hand in helping Persia forward.

The whole attitude of the Majlis in the brief period of its existence deserves respect, and will inspire it, if it is given a fair chance to develop without undue interference. In membership the National Assembly may number two hundred deputies, but thus far the list has been confined in the neighborhood of one hundred and fifty. Of this number, sixty are to constitute by law a Senate, and both this body and the National Consultive Assembly shall approve all measures. The term of office to which the deputies are elected is two years, and they are chosen by the six classes of voters (princes of the realm, ecclesiastics, nobles, merchants, land-holders, and tradesmen) throughout the thirty-three provinces of the kingdom. There are a score and four score of incidental matters that enter into the make-up of the 'four pillars of the Persian constitution,' beginning with (1) the royal proclamation of Muzaffar, granting the Parliament; (2) the electoral law of 1906; (3) the fundamental laws of the same year, regulating the manner of constituting the Assembly and assigning its duties, rights, and executive; and (4) the supplementary laws of 1907, touching on the wider powers of the realm. This, in a nutshell, is the content of the Persian Constitution, which has given to the people a new idea, a new possibility, and a new power, if they can wield it.

The entire tone of the people, in the capital at least, so far as I could judge it, seemed more wide-awake, more inclined to throw off the old lethargy of indifference, more ready to come into touch not only with matters that were being agitated by



YARI-ZADEH, ONE OF THE DEFENDERS FOR TARRIE



THE COURTSIDE ON WHICH MUZAFFAR AD-DIN SHAH
LAY IN STATE



A VIEW OF TEHRAN



A GROUP OF ADVANCED LEADERS IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL MOVEMENT

their local leaders, but with all events in the civilized world. The establishment of newspapers had done much. Some of the titles of these organs of more advanced thought are significant — among them are the ‘Majlis’ (Assembly), ‘Progress,’ ‘Gabriel’s Trumpet,’ ‘New Iran,’ and a dozen others — while the growth of expressed public opinion and the utterance of the hitherto unknown watchword of ‘liberty, equality, and fraternity’ are notable evidences of the new spirit that prevails.¹

Signs of progress were equally noticeable in the introduction of municipal regulations and the improvement of matters of domiciling. Buildings of two stories were not wholly unknown as modest forebears of a possible future generation of skyscrapers; houses were numbered; and names of streets were indicated. The quota of phaetons that gave accommodation for driving about the city was notably increased, and the prices tended more to conform to a recognized tariff. The main thoroughfares were occasionally sprinkled and cleaned, and regularly mounted guards (unfortunately still necessary) patrolled the streets at night to preserve order. Minor municipal regulations had been introduced in increasing numbers and met with better observance, while even so modern an institution as the Western diversion of ‘moving pictures’ and the entertainment of the gramophone had been introduced to stay. These are but trifles, and undoubtedly they seem so to the more casual reader; but to the observer, who turns to look at the last page of the story of advance, they are signs of the times, veritable omens by which to forecast the future.

By way of general judgment, this may be said: If the reform movement, so well instituted, and the preponderance of liberal ideas are to succeed in the Land of the Shah, then there must be more education in Persia. Only in this way can the masses, who are yet unprepared, be made capable of administering the privileges of government that are already in their hands. The outlook in this respect is not unpromising. Furthermore,

¹ See Wishard, *Twenty Years*, p. 335; Browne, *Persian Revolution*, p. 143.

transportation must be improved everywhere if the life-blood of commerce is to course freely through the somewhat hardened arteries of trade. Firm and equable legislation, moreover, must mete out truer justice to the people, if their hope for liberty, equality, and fraternity is actually to be realized. The state organization must, furthermore, recognize more keenly than it does the necessity of developing some sort of an adequate force that may be able independently to preserve order within the bounds of the country and to defend its borders from invasion or encroachment from without. Above all, it seems to me, is the paramount necessity of believing in the dignity of labor. Carlyle's doctrine of work must form a tenet in the newer creed which may mean Iran's utter regeneration. This article of faith is to be included in the newer creed, not only in theory, but in practice. Yes, the soft trill of the Nightingale must be forgotten and the drowsy fragrance of the Rose shaken off, if Persia is truly to assume once more the strength of the Lion and to follow the high path of the Sun. Then will such titles as *Šūr-i Isrāfil*, or 'Gabriel's Trumpet,' have real meaning; then may the glories of the reign of Jamshid return once more; and then may the hand of a new Cyrus and a new Darius be outstretched to grasp the hand of fellowship and support extended by lands that know the rule of a Liberal Government and the blessings of a Constitution, and the pristine glory of Iran thus re-assume its past effulgence.



THE BAHARISTAN, OR PARLIAMENT BUILDING

CHAPTER IX

ON THE TRACK OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

‘The storie of Alisaundre is so commune
That every wight that hath discrecioun
Hath herd somewhat or al of his fortune.’

— CHAUCER, *Monk's Tale*, 3821–3823.

‘LEFT Teheran 7.55 A.M., Friday, May 24’—so reads the first note of the day's memoranda in my diary on the morning of our departure from the Persian capital. ‘Eastward Ho!’ was the word as we turned our faces towards Khurasan, or ‘the Province of the Sun,’ for a journey of almost six hundred miles to Mashad.¹ There was a freshness in the air that reacted in a buoyancy of spirits when we remembered that a portion of our route was to follow the track along which Alexander the Great had swept in pursuit of Darius Codomannus III, the last of the Achaemenian kings, nearly twenty-three centuries ago.

Our start was made in two post-phaetons, each with four horses whose harness was fastened with ropes or tied with strings.² Hovannes Agopian, or ‘John,’ our servant, was safely bestowed with the luggage in one vehicle; my comrade and I had tucked ourselves away amid the smaller baggage in the other. Beggars innumerable swarmed about our wheels or blockaded the poverty-stricken streets through which we had to drive for half an hour before reaching the suburbs of the city. The maimed, the halt, and the blind seemed hopelessly mixed up in the *mêlée* of pack-laden porters, business-eyed

¹ For the distance see Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 256.

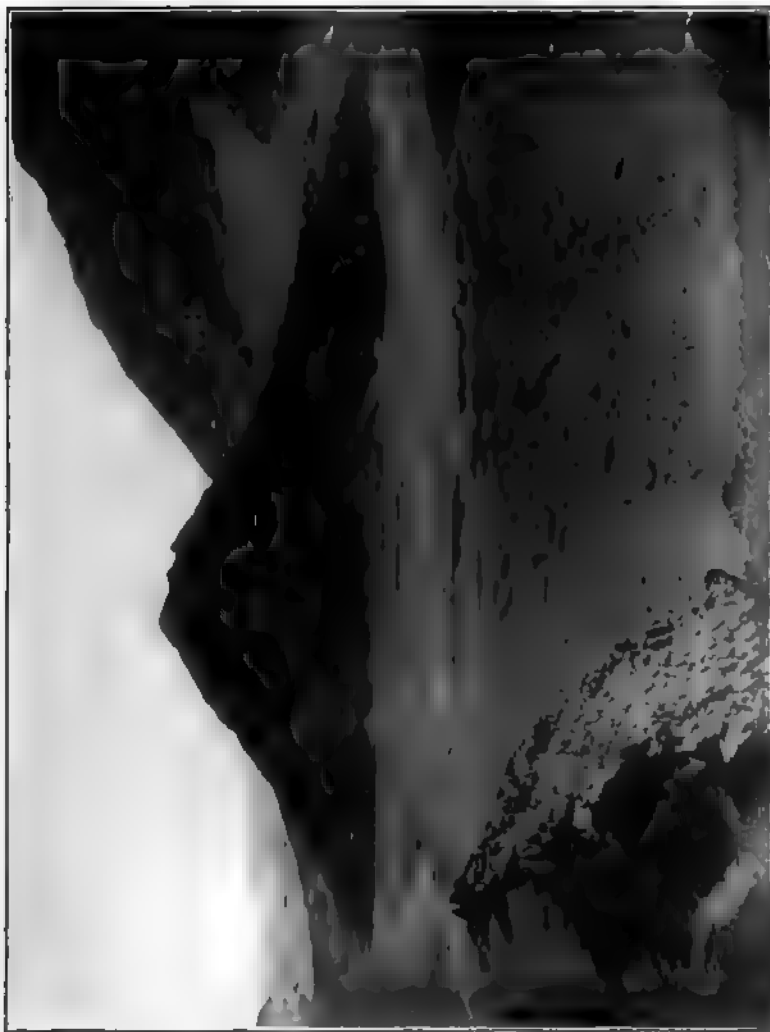
² On the next journey (1910) I left Teheran, Friday, June 3, at 6.25 A.M.,

with my old-time servant, Mirza Safar Adilbegh, now a physician, as my guide.

traders, strings of camels, and flocks of sheep, all pressing towards the bazaars. From time to time some poor blind wretch of the ragged rout would have to scramble headlong to the side of the way to escape the horses' hoofs ; but he never ceased for a moment the piteous cry for alms that formed part of the general chorus. Such scenes as these must have seemed doubly sad to Darius, as he fled before Alexander from Ragha, now Rai, whose ruins lay on our road five or six miles to the southeast.

We were in a musing mood. The hour was more conducive to thought than to conversation. The ground seemed sown with the seeds of a historic past. Darius Codomannus, who was uppermost in our thoughts, had been born under an unlucky star. The astrologers who cast the horoscope on his natal day must surely have scanned the heavens with anxiety, for there was an ill omen somewhere ; but the star of Macedon was still below the horizon, and none had the prescience to foresee how soon it would be in the ascendant. When the conjunction came, disaster for Persia followed.

Defeat after defeat, in fatal threefold sequence, had been Darius's lot from the day when his hosts first met the flower of Grecian arms under Alexander. The battle at the River Granicus in 334 B.C. was but the first of the triple wave of woe that was surging forward, impelled by destiny. Issus and Arbela followed in 333 and 331, and the great billow was now cresting to break. Flight and pursuit from the south had ever been the cruel sequence in the story. The royal seat at Persepolis had been abandoned to Alexander and his reveling hosts. I was able to imagine that scene, for I had wandered once through those ruined halls, left desolate after the orgy and Greek torch had celebrated a night of triumph over the last of the Achaemenians. At Ecbatana (and I thought of it when in Hamadan) Darius had made a halt with his dispirited troops, 'having sent forward the women and what property he still had left, with the covered wagons,' for safety to the Caspian



MOI STAINS AT RAI, ANCIENT RAGHA
With the Zoroastrian Tower of Silence on the Hillside

Gates,¹ and then had resumed his fugitive course northward to Ragha, turning thence eastward on the road towards Bactria in the forlorn hope of there retrieving his lost fortunes.

I fancy I could picture his despair of heart as his envoys brought ever the ominous tidings that the Greeks were approaching nearer and nearer to his train. From his memory, too, could never be blotted the recollection of that saddest of days when the faithful eunuch Teireus brought him news of the death of his queen, who had been captured (though well treated) by Alexander.² True, the devoted messenger had sought to comfort his sovereign master with the hope that 'the Lord Ormazd would make his glory to shine bright once again';³ but the monarch may well have seen in prophetic vision that he himself was soon to be led in judgment before 'the great god Auramazda, the greatest of the gods'—*baga vazraka Auramazdā hya mathishta bagānām*.⁴ There is little doubt, too, that the Magian priests, who ministered to the king and prophesied for his disheartened hosts, were still fervently lifting their prayers to Ormazd in his behalf; but all in vain, and Firdausi imputes felonious treason shortly afterwards to two of these very priests.⁵

From Alexander's historians, especially the Greek Arrian and the Roman Quintus Curtius, we know the route that Darius must have taken via Ragha to reach the Caspian Gates. This pass formed the portal to Khurasan, and was one of the keys to

¹ Arrian, *Anabasis*, 3. 19. 2.

² Arrian, *Anab.* 2. 12. 3-8; 4. 20. 1-3; Plutarch, *Alex.* 30. 3-7; Justin, *Philipp.* 11. 9, end.

³ Plutarch, *Alex.* 30. 3.

⁴ OP. Inscr. *Xerx. Alv.* 1. The mood of Darius is shown also by Curtius, *Alex.* 5. 8. 12; 5. 12. 7-12.

⁵ Firdausi, *Shāh Nāmāh*, ed. Vullers-Landauer, 3. 1800, 1804; tr. Mohl, *Livre des rois*, 5. 69, 74. So also other Oriental allusions to the death of Darius, e.g. Mujmil at-

Tavarikh, *Journal asiatique*, 3 sér.

11. 338, 358; 4 sér. 1. 395, 418; Ibn al-Athir, 3. 296. 2. In Tha'alibi (tr. Zotenberg, pp. 408-411) the assassins are spoken of as two chamberlains. The classic accounts of the death of Darius at the hands of the conspirators Bessus, Nabarzanes, and Barsaentes are found in Arrian, 3. 21; Curtius, 5. 35-38; Diodorus Siculus, 17. 71; Plutarch, *Alex.* 43; Justin, 11. 15; and cf. Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* 6. 25.

the East in ancient days. Its fame was renowned, and I shall give the details on this subject, with citations in full, in a separate monograph on the Caspian Gates, to which I may refer the reader who may be interested in these more technical details.¹

Alexander reached Ragha in the latter part of June, 330 B.C., after a series of forced marches from Ecbatana, in which scarcity of water, rapidity of movement, and the prevailing heat had caused large numbers both of men and horses to fall by the way.² Here, therefore, he decided to give his troops a much-needed rest of five days. It is possible that the length of this stay may have been determined in part by the phase of the moon (a new moon falling on June 27) and the prospective necessity of night marches, imposed by the heat.³ All this was over two thousand years ago, but even now we could see the site of ancient Ragha, or Rhagae, in the ruins of Rai, as we looked to the right from our wagon over the level tract backed by jagged mountains. The Gabr *Dakhmah*, or 'Tower of Silence,' showed out clear with its gypsum-covered walls—a whitened sepulchre indeed, since on its top the Zoroastrians of Teheran still expose their dead to be devoured by vultures, as enjoined in the sacred books of their religion.⁴ The site

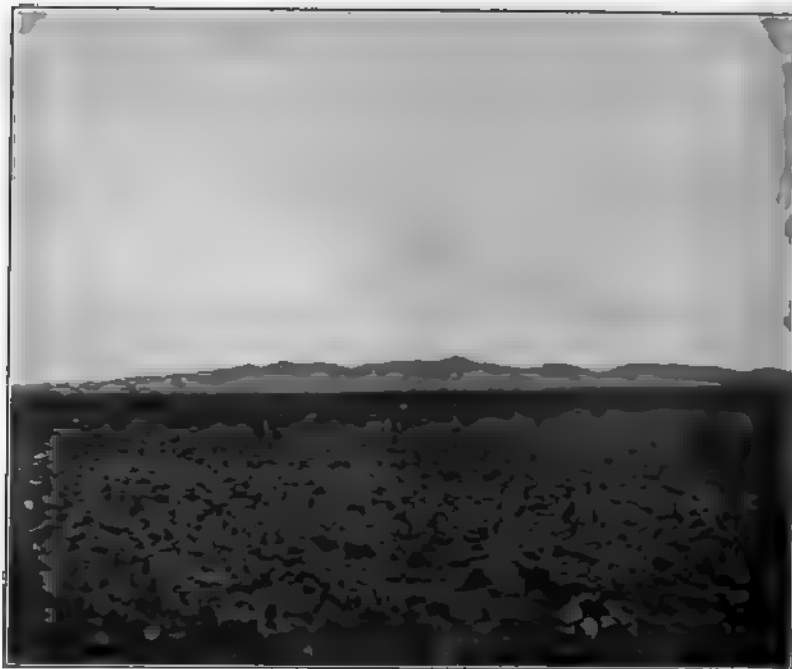
¹ This monograph, *Caspiæ Portæ, or the Caspian Gates of Antiquity*, will appear later.

² Arrian, *Anab.* 3. 20. 1-4; Plutarch, *Alex.* 42. 3. The time of the year may be deduced from Arrian, 8. 22. 2; consult also Zolling, *Alexanders Feldzug in Central-Asien*, pp. 108, 113, 2 ed., Leipzig, 1875.

³ The probable phase of the moon for June 27, 330 B.C., I have learned from Dr. M. G. Weinrich, of the Department of Astronomy at Columbia University. He has kindly informed me that 'in all probability the moon was *new* on the 178th day of the year 330 B.C. (chronological), or, according to modern reckoning, on June 27,

330 B.C. According to this the moon was full on or about June 12 and July 12 of that year.' Travelers who have caravanned in Persia in the hot season will best appreciate the significance of night marches. There was, besides, a strategic advantage in selecting the night, since the Persians were averse to making night attacks, both because of their method of encamping (cf. Xenophon, *Anab.* 3. 4. 35; Arrian, *Anab.* 3. 10. 1), and because of their belief that darkness was one of the creations of Ahriman (cf. Avesta, Ys. 57. 18; Vd. 8. 35; 19. 30).

⁴ For a description of Rai (Ragha) and a sketch of its history see Jackson, *Persia*, pp. 428-441, 408; and see



KHURANAN ROAD AFTER LEAVING TEHRAN



A BLIND MAN BY THE WAYSIDE



A MOVING HAYSTACK



HALTING FOR A DRINK

itself is one of the oldest landmarks of the bygone faith, and grimly it seemed to beckon back with dead hand to the forgotten days of the last Achaemenian king.

Soon after leaving Rai we began to skirt the edges of the Plain of Varamin, which receives its name from the ruined city of Varamin, lying some hours distant from Rai.¹ The road along much of the way was level, foretokening the character of a great part of the expanse we were to traverse in crossing northern Persia. The region in general is well watered by streams from the Jaj, or Jaja Rud, which flow briskly from the mountains in the north, but ultimately lose themselves in the desert. Though water is abundant, I noticed that there was little cultivation in the district except around the hamlets, where special crops of wheat had been sown. Much of the plain was covered merely with tussocks of *sipand*, a weed too bitter even for camels to eat, and used chiefly for burning, though poor enough for that. The natives find in it one virtue, however; they gather its seeds and toss them into the fire as a charm to avert the Evil Eye.² I wondered if the same superstition prevailed in the days of Darius; and surely there must have been virtue enough to safeguard a whole community in the bundled mass of the stuff which we saw mingled with grass in the burden on the back of a little donkey who looked like a moving haystack. Some camels which we passed at the next moment came off better than he; for they had been relieved of their loads and were grazing contentedly on the prickly thorn

other articles by the same author in *Spiegel Memorial Volume*, pp. 237-245, Bombay, 1908, and in *Essays in Modern Theology as a Testimonial to Charles A. Briggs*, pp. 93-97, New York, 1911.

¹ For references on the subject of the old city of Varamin in Oriental and modern writers, see Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, pp. 216-217, and Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 352-353, and cf.

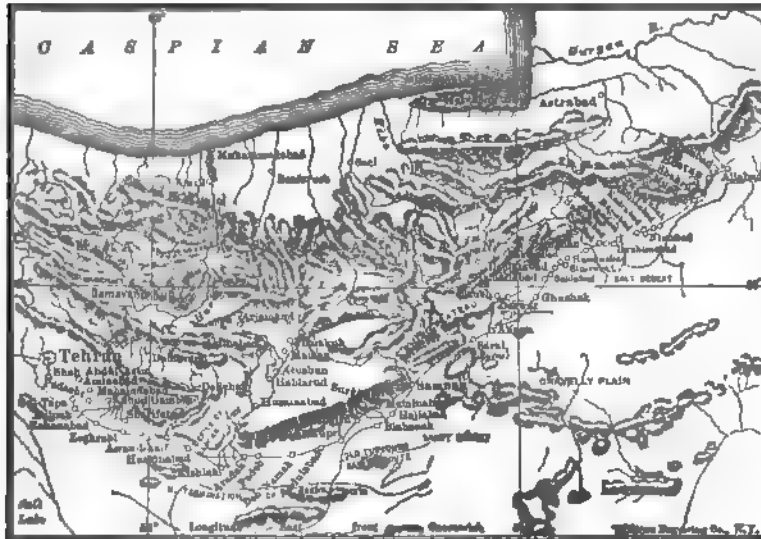
Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog. de la Perse*, p. 687. For illustrations of the monuments and ruins see Barth, *Denk-maler persischer Baukunst*, 1. 111 plates 18, 19, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 71, Berlin, 1901-1910, likewise Sven Hedin, *Overland to India*, 1. 172-177, London, 1910.

² For a Persian quotation on this use of the wild rue (*salpand*), see Brown, *Alt. Hist. of Persia*, 1. 464.

called *str* (lit. 'sharp') that flourished here and there on the plain.

The color of the soil, as the miles rolled by, took on a somewhat greenish hue, permeating the very stones that were whirled up by the galloping horses, and indicating, by their peculiar robin's-egg tinge, that the turquoise mines were to come later on the route near Nishapur.

A halt was made at Khatunabad, five farsakhs, or about eighteen miles, from Teheran; and after a drive of two far-



MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE ROUTE FOLLOWED BY ALEXANDER THE GREAT

sakhs more over road that was rubbly, but quick of transit for both infantry and cavalry, as Alexander had, another change of horses was made at 12.15 P.M. in Sharifabad. Here we ate our hurried luncheon of eggs while the men were harnessing up. These two stations where we had halted were as simple as the natives that lounged around them, and they had little to differentiate them from many others on the route through Khurasan; and yet their proud ancestors may once have listened, 'as 'twere

with a defeated joy,' to the tramping steeds of Alexander's hosts that were destined to temper the stigma of conquest by the glory of future renown.¹ To while away the time, I asked our driver if he knew anything about Alexander. He immediately answered by giving the Macedonian's usual name in the East, *Iskandar-i Zūl Karnain*, 'Alexander of the Two Horns,' and said that he knew that 'Iskandar had set out to measure the world'—a good answer; but when questioned as to where the conqueror came from or whither he went, the man frankly answered, 'I don't know'—*na mīdānam*. Nor had he any knowledge of Darius, except that 'Darab was a Pahlavan (champion) like Khusru, Suhrab, and Rustam.' Yet in ages past the fleeing king had probably made nearly the same halts as we had made on our morning march. In point of distance from the capital, a stopping-place like Sharifabad corresponds to others on the same route, though along slightly different roads, such as Aluhak or Hissar Amir, or answers to the main station, Kabud Gumbaz (lit. 'Blue Dome'), mentioned by most writers that have traveled this way, and the bluish green dome of whose mosque we had seen three or four miles to the north of the road.²

Some of the Arab-Persian geographers of a thousand years ago have left notes of this route, or have listed the stations from Rai to Nishapur and beyond. The road-books of these old-time authorities are still of service in recording the itinerary of the journey or possible military marches in this same direction.

¹ The generally accepted fact that Alexander followed this course and not the long northern route over the mountain of Firuz Kuh, as has sometimes been thought, will be brought out in part in this and the following chapters, and still more fully in my promised monograph, *Caspiae Portae*.

² Kabud Gumbaz was mentioned, for example, by Van Mierop (about 1740) in Hanway, *Hist. Acct. Casp.*

Sea, 1. 357 = 3 ed. 1. 246; Ouseley (1812), *Travels*, 3. 204; Fraser (1821), *Narrative*, p. 286; Eastwick (1862), *Journal*, p. 135; O'Donovan (1880), *Merv*, 1. 367; Curzon (1889), *Persia*, 1. 298; others will be cited in my *Caspiae Portae, or the Caspian Gates of Antiquity*. Consult, furthermore, the map in Houtum-Schindler, *Eastern Persian Irak*, London, 1897.

Among those that have left such material may be mentioned Ibn Khurdadhbah (864 A.D.), who was postmaster of the Jibal provinces in the ninth century; Ibn Rustah (903 A.D.), who gave a detailed account of the great Khurasan route, stage by stage; and Istakhri (951 A.D.), himself a native of Persepolis.¹

The first stage in these Muslim itineraries extends as far as Afridhun, practically corresponding to our mid-day halt, and probably to be identified with the classic Paredon, as I have explained elsewhere.² Ibn Rustah, in 903, gave the distance from Rai, with an added description of the road, as follows: 'From Rai to Afridhun is nine farsakhs . . . with mountains on the right hand and on the left; you have to cross flowing rivers, about eighty streams, which are called *Hastādh Rūdhān*, 'Eighty Rivers,' all of which must be forded before reaching the village of Afridhun.'³ This was exactly our own experience. The streams were swollen by the unusually heavy rains and were almost impassable at some points, as they swept over their low banks, flooding the level expanse.⁴ The wheels of our wagons were frequently almost submerged, and we saw some heavily laden donkeys nearly carried off their feet by the rush of the water. These same floods may have been responsible for driving out a gigantic lizard, which we came across later, lying dead on the road where there was a slight ascent. This monstrous specimen was certainly one of the most disgusting creatures ever created by Ahriman, and I could imagine it gnawing at the roots of *Hōm*, the tree of immortality, according to old Iranian legend.⁵

Some six farsakhs beyond, or eight hours after leaving Te-

¹ See Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, pp. 12-13.

² See *Caspiae Portae*, and also my article in the *Dastur Hoshang Memorial Volume*, Bombay, 1911.

³ Ibn Rustah, ed. de Goeje, *Bibl. Arab. Geog.* 7. 169. 5-10; compare also

Marquart, *Untersuch. z. Gesch. von Eran*, 2. 27-29, in *Philologus, Supplementband*, 10, Leipzig, 1905.

⁴ I found them but slightly lower in the dry weather of June, 1910.

⁵ See Pahlavi Bd. 18. 2.

heran, we arrived near Aivan-i Kaif, which probably occupies the site of the place where Alexander pitched his camp at the end of the first day before entering the Caspian Gates, although that may have been near some ruins still seen two or three miles to the south.¹ These latter remains I took occasion to visit on my second journey by making a slight detour from the road before proceeding to Aivan-i Kaif.² The ruins form two groups, lying near each other, and are called respectively *Kal'ah-Mārī*, 'Serpent Fortress,' and *Kal'ah-i Kīs* (or *Gīs*), 'Maiden Fortress.' Hoary antiquity is ascribed to both these crumbling piles, for the native whom we picked up as a guide said that popular tradition ascribed them to Kai Kaus, a monarch who ruled over Iran nearly a millennium before the Christian era. Eastwick understood them to be a part of the palace of the Achaemenian king Cambyses (d. 522 B.C.), but I think he must have heard the name Kai Kaus, as I did, and supposed it to mean Cambyses, particularly as the name of the town Aivan-i *Kaif* is often taken to be Aivan-i *Kai*, 'Pavilion of the Kaianians,' the ancient Iranian dynasty that corresponds in part to the Achaemenians.

The Kalah Mari fort probably owes its reptilian designation to its having been infested with snakes. It lies near the former bed of the local river, which has undergone a change of course. It is about two hundred yards square and has walls about eight feet thick, built of large sun-dried bricks whose size bespeaks their antiquity.³ Remnants of two gates were to be seen, one in the northern rampart, the other in the southern wall; and the whole ruined fortifications reminded me much of the ruins at Merv, to be described in a later volume. The smaller fortress, Kalah-i Kis, or 'Maiden Fort,' which lies a

¹ See Eastwick, *Journal of a Diplomat's Residence*, 2. 137, London, 1864.

² I may add that there is a modern fortified place about five miles north of the road and to the west of Aivan-i Kaif, but it seems to have no claim to

antiquity, and is called *Kal'ah-i Kūh Rūs*, 'Fortress of the Russian Mountain.'

³ On the subject of large sun-dried bricks in Persia, see Jackson, *Persia*, pp. 92, 127, 162, 253, 255, 435.

hundred yards to the south, is built of bricks smaller in size and gives an impression of belonging to a much later date.¹ Its single dilapidated gateway is in the northern wall.

In addition to these two groups of ruins there is, about a quarter of a mile to the east, a large mound, or *tapah*, about forty feet high, that has some remains which are certainly much older than either of the other two. Its walls (like those of the Gaur Kalah at Merv) have been reduced to mounds of clay, out of which its bricks had originally been formed, and the sand has now swept over these crumbled ramparts, so that it was not possible to recognize more than its general outlines. In my note-book I added a query as to whether the débris might not go back to Sasanian times, and I have since found that Eastwick (1862) speaks of the elevation as 'a Fire-worshippers' mound' and says: 'On the top are the remains of a temple.' It would be hard to recognize these traces as such today. Fragments of pottery were all that told of a dead past, and a fox ran out of its burrow in the middle of the enclosure—a living proof of the desolation that reigned supreme.

After this excursion of an hour and a half we found ourselves drawing near to Aivan-i Kaif. To enter the town, however, we had to drive through the bed of the muddy river that traverses it. For a moment I had forgotten that on my first journey to Iran I had approached other Persian towns by the course of the river-bed. I thought only of the story, which Herodotus tells, of how the army of Cyrus took Babylon by entering the city through the bed of the river, whose course had been deflected for that purpose.² It was certain that our own advance, though not martial, was difficult enough to call for

¹ Eastwick (2. 138) calls this smaller fort by its more Persian title *Chihal Dukhtar*, 'Forty Daughters,' and says that according to legend 'a princess lived there, who with thirty-nine other maidens dressed as men and went forth so attired to the chase and to war.'

² Herodotus, *History*, 1. 191. The second and third time when I was in Aivan-i Kaif (June 3 and 8, 1910) the river-bed was quite dry, as shown in my photograph.

some generalship on the part of our drivers. The horses of both wagons splashed, plunged, and leaped wildly forward amid a chorus of frantic yells and fierce slashings, while we lurched and rolled helplessly until finally we drew up at the Aivan-i Kaif post-house — a poor sort of place at best.

The distance we had traveled in the eight hours since leaving Teheran (behind which we could still see the white cone of Damavand gleaming) was about fifty miles.¹ Deducting the six miles from Teheran to Rai, we have 44 miles, or exactly the distance given by Tomaschek (383 stadia = $7\frac{3}{4}$ kilometers = 44 miles) for Alexander's first day's march from Ragha (Rhagae, Rai) to the Caspian Gates with picked troops who had just rested five days.² It is true that we made the distance in a wheeled vehicle, but it could be made as easily, or even more easily, on horseback, as I know from my own experience in *chāpāring* and caravaning nearly three thousand miles in Persia, and especially from my careful records on a second and third journey over this same road.³ O'Donovan,

¹ So Houtum-Schindler, *Routen in Chorassān*, in *Zt. Gesellsch. f. Erdkunde*, 12. 218, Berlin, 1877; Tomaschek, *Zur hist. Topographie von Persien*, in *Sb. kais. Akad. Wiss. zu Wien*, 102. 221-233, Vienna, 1883. Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 256, gives 51 miles; Captain Clerk, *Notes in Persia*, in *Journ. Roy. Geog. Soc.* 31. 37-38, gives only 42 miles, but a number of his distances seem to be underestimated; the distance according to Holdich, *Map of Persia*, seems to be about 50 miles, as I have given it. A table of distances along the route will appear in my *Caspiae Portae*.

² Tomaschek, *op. cit.* p. 221, as against Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, 2. 29, n. 1.

³ The time in transit on my second journey over the route, with delays for changes of horses at the various

stations, and including at least an hour or more for the excursion to the ruins near Aivan-i Kaif, was nine hours and a half (or deduct an hour from Rai), as follows: lv. Teheran, 6.25 A.M.; opposite Dakhmah at Rai, 7.15; Khatunabad, 9.35; arr. Sharifabad, 11.35; near Aivan-i Kaif, 2.45 P.M. [excursion for an hour and a half to the ruins of Kalah Mari and Kalah-i Kis]; arr. Aivan-i Kaif, 4.05 P.M. On the third transit, a week later upon my return trip, the distance between Aivan-i Kaif and Rai (with considerable loss of time) was covered in about eight hours: lv. Aivan-i Kalf, 12.20 P.M.; arr. near Rai, about 8.30 P.M.; arr. Teheran, 9.45 P.M. (deduct about one hour from time between Aivan-i Kaif and the vicinity of Rai, because of a broken wheel, not counting the usual normal stops and delays).

in 1880, accomplished the distance without difficulty on horseback in a single day; Curzon did the same in 1881, but in the reverse direction;¹ and on my third transit over the route I met at Khatunabad a Persian horseman who that very day had ridden the still longer distance from Kishlak to Khatunabad, had rested for five hours near the Sar-Darrah, or Caspian Gates, and was ready to pursue his journey farther. All this I mention in behalf of the vicinity of Aivan-i-Kaif as Alexander's first halting-place, emphasizing the fact that he was advancing, as Arrian says, only with light cavalry and the Macedonian phalanx that had withstood the test of the forced march from Ecbatana to Rhagae, so that the distance from the latter place to the Caspian Gates was only 'one day's journey for one marching as Alexander did' — ὁδὸν ἡμέρας μιᾶς ἐλαύνοντι ὡς Ἀλέξανδρος.² Truly ours had been Alexander's pace.

Aivan-i Kaif has a most euphonious name, for in Persian *Aivān* signifies 'Recreation Pavilion,' or 'Palace of Pleasure'; and local tradition, as already remarked, commonly considers the designation of the place to be Aivan-i Kai, 'Pavilion of the Kaianan Kings'; but the wretched condition of the entire town seemed to belie this high-sounding title, and almost

¹ See O'Donovan, *Merv*, 1. 366–369; Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 297–299. I must add that Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, 2. 29, 30, 34, 43, strongly urges that Alexander must have taken *two* days from Ragha to the Caspian Gates, but I cannot agree with him for the reasons already given, especially after having actually traversed the route in question three different times. It is true that the Arab-Persian itineraries indicate that the usual number of stages was two, but that was for ordinary caravans, whereas Alexander was pressing at full speed with the pick of his Macedonian phalanx, who were well rested, and with light cavalry. By several Europeans, who were not

hastening like Alexander or like O'Donovan (who even reached Kishlak, a stage beyond), Curzon, and others, the customary easy two stages (at caravan rate of speed) were followed. Thus two days were employed by Van Mierop (in 1743), quoted by Hanway, *Hist. Acct. Casp. Sea*, 1. 357–358 = 3 ed. 1. 246; Ferrier (1821), *Caravan Journeys*, pp. 54–55 (with a large and slow caravan, making two stages of 4 and 7 farsakhs, or 5 and 10 hours respectively); Eastwick (1862), *Journal of a Diplomat's Residence*, 2. 134–137 (making two night stages of 6 hours and 9 hours respectively, or a total of 14 hours from Rai).

² Arrian, *Anab.* 3. 20. 2.



TAPAH, OR MOUND, WITH TRACES OF RUINS, NEAR AIVAN-I KAIR



THE KALAH MARI, OR SERPENT FORT



AIVAN-I KAIF



THE RIVER-BED WHEN DRY, AIVAN-I KAIF

to justify the joke made half a century ago by the diplomat Eastwick, whose experience and humor suggested turning *Kaif* or *Kai* into *kaik*, the name for 'flea.'¹ To me the pestiferous flies were equally annoying, and the bleary-eyed, scabby-headed children were equally uninviting as they scampered about in the blazing sun that burned piteously throughout the day. Most travelers, in fact, speak in derogatory terms of this 'Palace of Pleasure';² and my friend and I agreed with their uncomplimentary judgment. We made all haste to quit the place — if haste can be made at Aivan-i Kaif — and were glad indeed when the 'lord of the post-house' condescendingly informed our servant that the horses were ready. The animals seemed to share in our eagerness to leave the little town, for they promptly ran away, dashing madly down into the river-bed, despite the efforts of the hostler, who rushed wildly in front of them and waved his jacket frantically in hopes of checking their headlong career. As a consequence the baggage wagon got stuck in the mud of the stream, and time was lost in extricating it and the balky steeds.

With slanting sun we made our way for about eight miles, or nearly an hour, across an uncultivated plain, dusty, though furrowed here and there by watercourses.³ At five o'clock⁴ we reached the entrance of the Sar-Darrah Pass — *Tang-i-Sar-i Darrah*, lit. 'Pass of the Head of the Valley'⁵ — which is also called Gardan-i Sar-Darrah, 'Gorge of Sar-Darrah,' and is sometimes known as Sardar-i Kuh, 'Chief of the Mountains.'⁶

¹ Eastwick, *Journal*, 2. 136.

² An exception is found in Ouseley, *Travels*, 3. 200–209, who appears to have been favorably impressed by the town when he traversed the route a century ago, spending the first night at Kabud Gumbaz and the second at Aivan-i Kaif; but that was in winter, Feb. 19–20, 1812.

³ See also Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 297; Eastwick, *Journal*, 2. 139.

⁴ The time on my second trip was:

lv. Aivan-i Kaif, 4.35 P.M.; arr. entrance to Pass, 5.20 P.M. On my return trip the time was about an hour: lv. Pass, 10.15 A.M.; arr. Aivan-i Kaif, 12.20 P.M.

⁵ See Tomaschek, *Zur hist. Topog. Pers.* 108. 222, and Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 294.

⁶ Various other spellings of the name are found in older books: e.g. Sirdara, Ser Dereh, Sardari, and Gurdunee Sirdara.

This notable defile is now generally believed to represent the Caspian Gates, or *Κάσπιαι Πύλαι* and *Caspiae Portae* of the Greek and Latin writers, and to be the mountain strait through which Alexander pursued Darius.

Having ridden or driven through the pass three different times and having made close observations of it after several years of study upon the subject, I feel sure of the accuracy of this identification. On the latest journey, moreover, I had an opportunity to compare it with the Sialak (*Siālāk*) Pass, a companion defile running parallel with it, about two or three miles north, through the mountain. I have contrasted it, furthermore, with the Firuz Kuh Pass, which lies many miles remote from it toward the north, or at nearly double its distance from Teheran. The details of this examination will be found in a special monograph, entitled *Caspiae Portae, or the Caspian Gates*, to be published later. These researches have fully convinced me that the only defile through which Alexander led his troops was the Sar-Darrah, as is generally accepted. I emphasize this, because doubts have sometimes been thrown on the subject.¹ It is certain that the Firuz Kuh Pass must be left out of consideration because of its extreme remoteness from the city Rhagae (Rai, near Teheran), a distance of over ninety miles, which Alexander could not have covered in a single day, as he is stated historically to have done; and there is abundant evidence besides to exclude that particular defile. As for the Sialak Pass, in behalf of which Rawlinson made a plea because of its greater likeness to Pliny's description of the Caspian Gates,² there are sufficient adverse reasons, especially the

¹ For example, Lord Curzon (*Persia*, 1. 293-297) had some hesitation on the subject.

² See Chodzko, *Une Excursion de Tehéran aux Pyles Caspiennes* (1835), in *Nouvelles annales des voyages, nouvelle série, année 1850*, 3. 280-308, Paris, 1850. Chodzko made the excursion through the Sialak and the

Sar-Darrah in company with Rawlinson, whose authority he especially cites. The plural, Caspian Gates, Chodzko believes (pp. 301-302) was to be explained by the fact of there being two passes—Sialak and Sar-Darrah. The name of the former, Rawlinson thought, might be due to Alexander's general, Seleucus; and both believed



APPROACH TO THE SAR-DARRAH PASS, OR CASPIAN GATES



NEARING THE ENTRANCE TO THE SAR-DARRAH PASS



DARIUS CODOMANNUS



ALEXANDER THE GREAT

fact that it would have been madness on Alexander's part to take cavalry through this narrow and dangerous defile when he had the easy pass of Sar-Darrah equally at his command. A careful scrutiny of the Sialak in both directions, and on horseback as well as on foot, left no question in my mind on this point. As a tangible proof of the ease with which a troop of cavalry or infantry could be shut out or shut in, I may state that I found the western ingress totally barred by a few rocks that had been dislodged by a storm three or four months before I visited the Sialak. For these and other reasons we may feel assured that Alexander's march was made only through the Sar-Darrah Pass, which we had now reached.

It was easy to imagine the breathless haste with which the Greeks had charged across the plain we had been traversing, and under what an intense strain they approached the mountains now looming high before us and guarding the pass with giant arms. The scene visualized itself to me in metrical form; and though the verses have no merit, I insert them because they convey an idea at least of how the scene struck me.

There was clatter of hoofs and rattle of arms,
As the host of the Greeks swept by;
'The sun was darkened,' the Persians say,
'By the dust of the plain in the sky.'¹

With breathless haste, spur driven deep
And long lance grasped amain,
His helm all loosed, at the head of his host,
Alexander dashed o'er the plain.

The pass lies before — the Caspian Gates,
The lock that Fate had set,
As Thermopylae was, two centuries ere,
When Hellas and Persia met.

that it was the defile chosen by Alexander. Besides what I have stated above against the view, I shall add other arguments in my monograph.

¹ A frequent image in Persian war poetry and prose.

The mountain crags guard well the pass;
 'Is Darius there with his men?'
 Till now he has fled — will he here make stand
 And retrieve his Glory again?¹

'Nite is ours — the victory ours!'
 The Greeks shout out as they speed;
 The valley resounds to their chargers' hoofs,
 As each horseman quickens his steed.

Yon scout — what brings he, with horse afoam?
 'The hosts of Darius have fled,
 Crying *Khshāyathiya marta asti* —
 "Our lord, the King, is dead!"'

The Persian troops had fled indeed, and there is little doubt that wild rumors about the king already filled the air, although Alexander did not learn that Darius was taken until just after passing through the Caspian Gates into the Plain of Khvar that day, nor did he come upon the king's dead body until four days later.

As the map shows, the Sar-Darrah Pass is a gorge cutting through a spur that juts out, some twenty miles, in a south-westerly direction from the great Alburz range.² This projection is called Kuh-i Tuz, 'Salt Mountain,'³ and it forms a barrier that divides the two plains of Varamin and Khvar. The pass itself, which the natives reckon as two farsakhs long, is something over six miles in length.⁴ A stream of salt water seams its way irregularly through the entire defile, thus joining by its shining thread the plains which the mountains divide.

¹ This is the Persian *kavaēm xvarəñō* 'Glory of Kings,' in the Avesta.

² See Holdich, *Map of Persia*, London, Stanford, 1897.

³ The name is from the extensive saline deposits, as noted below. See also Pliny, *N. H.* 6. 14-15, 17, §§ 43-44 (quoted below), and the allusion in

Van Mierop's diary (quoted by Hanway, 1. 358 = 3 ed. 1. 246) to 'passing by a rock of salt.'

⁴ This estimate of six miles is in harmony with Clerk, *Notes in Persia*, in *Journ. Roy. Geog. Soc.* 31. 38, and with Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 294, at which latter place a good note on the varying estimates will be found.



GORGE OF THE SAB-DARRAN PASS, OR CASPIAN GATE

The direction to the opening of the gorge (which otherwise might easily be missed) is made visible long in advance by the whitened, dusty trail left by the caravans as of yore. No such track marked the way to Sialak, on the other hand, though its entrance could be discerned a couple of miles to the north, between two low hills, one with a tawny top of sand, the other with a brownish crest; and our driver, like the postmaster, insisted that the only route used by caravans was through the Sar-Darrah Pass.

The mountains on the left of the entrance to the Sar-Darrah are high; the range on the right consists of hills of lower elevation. The ingress itself had formerly been protected by defensive works, on the right or lower elevation.¹ The base of one of these fortresses was of stone, surmounted by ramparts of reddish brown brick, and the structure was fairly preserved; the other was older and was in a ruinous condition; both forts, in truth, looked to be little more than monuments of the fact that they once had been able to bar the right of way. The strategic value of the pass was manifest. Alexander knew it well. So did Darius, but he dared not make the stand. Exactly two thousand years later (1731) the Afghans, after taking Isfahan, were able to check Nadir Shah at this very spot, as he came from Khurasan to attack them.²

The road by which our wagons entered the gorge was a winding declivity, short but steep. The wheels had to be chained and the horses led, as the slope was too precipitous and the road too cramped for really safe driving without this precaution. A short ascent followed before descending into the actual gulch and reaching the bed of the stream. The margins of this hurrying rivulet, which furrows its way through rubble and brownish clay, were incrustated with salt, and its waters were

¹ On the remains of these fortifications, see also Fraser, *Narrative of a Journey into Khorasān*, p. 294, London, 1825; O'Donovan, *Merv*, 1. 368.

² See Truilhier, *Mémoire descriptif de la route à Meched*, in *Bull. soc. géog. 2 sér.* 9. 117, Paris, 1838; and Morier, *Second Journey through Persia*, 2. 366.

briny to the taste. No dust-parched army could quench their thirst in its brackish waves. The bitterness of the stream, the narrowness of the gateway, and the saline exudation from the rocks, recalled vividly to my mind the description given by Pliny of the entrance to the Caspian Gates.

‘The ridges are broken by a passage so narrow that wagons proceed singly with difficulty for a distance of eight miles, the whole work having been made by hand. On the right hand and on the left are over-hanging rocks, which look as if they had been exposed to the action of fire.¹ There is a dry tract for twenty-eight miles. Salt water, issuing from the rocks and collecting into a stream (*conrivatus*), adds difficulty to the defile.² Moreover, the large quantity of snakes does not permit passing through except in winter. . . . The Pratitae, called Paredon, hold the Caspian Gates.³ On the other side of these lie the deserts of Parthia and the ridges of Cithenus. Directly after the same (i.e. Mt. Cithenus?) there is the most delightful place of all Parthia; it is called Choara. There are two cities of the Parthians there, formerly in opposition to the Medes. Calliope (is one) and the other was formerly on the rock of Issatis. Hecatompylus, the capital of Parthia itself, is 133 miles from the Gates.’⁴

For some distance, as we drove through the first gulch and alongside the stream, there was room only for our carriage, and for a considerable space we had to enter the bed of the water-course itself. The width of the passage was sometimes hardly a dozen feet, furrowing its way through soft volcanic rock and earth, then slightly widening to a breadth varying between fifteen and forty feet, and afterwards broadening out to two hundred yards, so that we were able to drive up along the

¹ Lit. ‘similar to charred remains’ — *ambustis similes*.

² Pliny refers elsewhere (*N. H.* 31. 7. 39, § 75) to the salt streams of the Caspian Gates.

³ The name *Paredon* preserves the older form, *Parēdūn*, of the station that is called *Afrīdūn* by the Arab-Persian writers, and which lies on the road from Rai to the Sar-Darrah Pass and Khvār (Choara), as I have

noted elsewhere. On *Afrīdūn*, *Parēdūn*, compare Marquart, *Untersuchungen z. Gesch. von Eran*, 2. 33, Leipzig, 1905.

⁴ Pliny, *N. H.* 6. 14–15. 17, §§ 43–44. Instead of ‘133 miles,’ Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, 2. 22, proposes to read, ‘[c]cxxxiii millia passuum’; but that is not satisfactory, as I have noted in my forthcoming monograph on the Caspian Gates.

sides, or ride there, as I did when I went on horseback. The point of this memorandum from my note-book is clear when compared with the passage just quoted from Pliny.

After the distance of a mile or more, the pass begins to widen considerably, and gradually forms a small plain, perhaps three miles broad at its greatest expansion, but enclosed on all sides by hills. These heights are of a brownish and greenish color, sometimes of a purplish tinge, and they are without a trace of verdure. Their geologic formation presents a peculiar appearance, as their sides are generally streaked or ribbed with perpendicular bands that resemble clay rather than rock, and sometimes contain a pebbly deposit. We commented upon their unusual aspect, and I have since seen it remarked upon by others. Fraser, for example, in speaking particularly of the hills at the entrance, notes that they are of 'an earthy consistence,' and he speaks of their showing 'the rock bursting occasionally from their surface in very fantastic forms';¹ while O'Donovan describes the heights of the pass in general as 'tall cliffs of gypsum and ferruginous rock.'² Shah Nasir ad-Din, when he passed through the gorge on his pilgrimage to Mashad in 1866, made a special observation upon them. He wrote in his *Siyāhat-i Shāh*, or 'Diary of the Shah's Journey,' as follows:—

'The mountains on the sides of the valley are like strong walls. From the fact that they have few stones, and especially because they are frequently visited by rains, there have been produced deep parallel furrows, and [consequently] they have a different appearance from other mountains.'³

The Shah's observation, 'not like other rocks,' might again be compared independently with Pliny. A trained geologist would have known, as we did not, whether the pass had changed materially in its physical conditions since the days of Alexander

¹ Fraser, *Narrative*, p. 294.

² O'Donovan, *Merv*, 1. 368.

³ From Nasir ad-Din Shah's *Siyāhat-i Shāh* (*Diary of a Journey to Mashad and Afghanistan*), p. 32,

Teheran (lithographed), 1286 A.H. = 1869 A.D. The words relating to the furrowed appearance of the rocks are in Persian: *khūtūt-i mutavāsīah* 'amīkah ba-ham rasīdah.

and Darius ; its present appearance, however, certainly accorded well with Pliny's description. As to the matter of the snakes, however, to which Pliny alludes, there seemed to be a difference of opinion on the subject among the natives, some telling me that serpents were found, others that there were none.¹

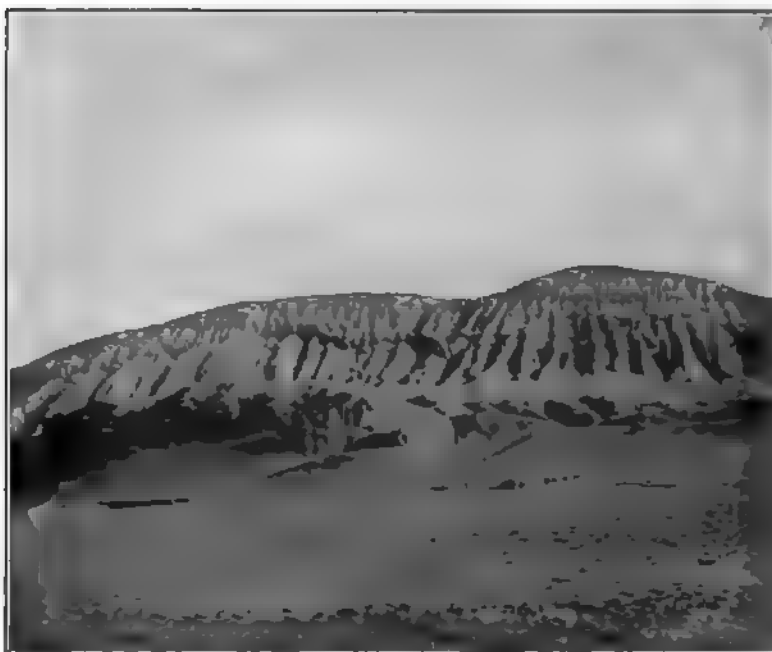
In the middle of the plain, or about halfway through the pass, there is a tower-like structure of comparatively recent date, resembling a giant beehive and corresponding to the numerous reservoirs and ice-houses that are built by the Persians throughout Khurasan. It is round and consists of a succession of seventeen layers or tiers of mortar, with greenish stones sunk in the cement ; and the last four of these circular ridges are constructed only of cement. The whole is surmounted by a small cupola, also of cement and about ten feet high, with a hole in the flooring, surrounded by bricks—the only bricks noticed in the structure. The total height of the fabric is about thirty feet, and the doorway openings in the cupola face nearly, but not exactly, the points of the compass. The use for which the building was designed appears to have been to serve as an *ambār*, or reservoir-receptacle, and near it was a deep cistern with steps leading down to a vaulted arch of masonry, which was connected by a pipe with a well close by, but which was so far below the surface that I could not see whether it contained water.

About fifty yards to the east was an insignificant mound, adjoining which was a quite modern structure, evidently used by caravans, as could be judged from its well. Still farther eastward, about a hundred yards distant, were the ruins of a small stronghold (*ribāt*), built of stones, rubble, and bricks ; but the stones were not especially large, nor were the fragments of greenish yellow bricks of a size sufficiently massive to indicate any noteworthy antiquity. Yet this impression differs from the opinion of Fraser and the view of Eastwick, with the

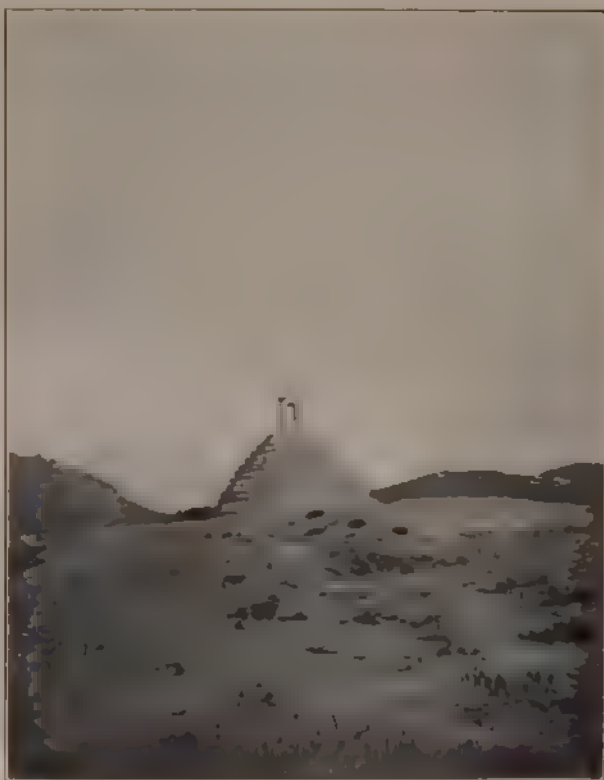
¹ Truilhier (1807), *op. cit.* p. 112, says, 'on y voit de gros serpents en assez grand nombre.'



ROCKY HEIGHTS AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE PASS



PECULIAR HILL-FORMATION IN THE SAR-DARRAH, OR CASPIAN GATES



THE TOWER-LIKE STRUCTURE IN THE SAR-DARRAH PASS

writings of both of whom I was familiar. I can only think that the ruins ('just a jumble of ruins,' I noted in my memoranda) must have changed considerably since Fraser's time, nearly a century ago. He described the stronghold as a structure forty yards square, composed of dark granite, and strengthened by bastions, especially at the gateway in the northern face. Fraser furthermore comments on 'the large bricks found among the débris'; and, regarding this fact (rightly, if so) as a sign of age, like the Gabr bricks to which I have referred elsewhere,¹ he concludes that there can be no doubt as to the antiquity of the building.² In similar manner, Eastwick thought that the structure was 'probably 1500 or 2000 years old,' and he observed that its architecture resembled that of the stone stronghold of Anushirvan at Ahuan.³ I should gladly defer to their judgment, but I have simply stated my impression as I noted it on the spot.

The face of the plain around these ruins was whitened in every direction by the saline efflorescence that so universally prevailed. A mile or more to the east of them, the plain began gradually to contract its expanse, the valley to close in, and the mountains to crowd together their wrinkled and cracked foreheads. Not a vestige of green relieved their bald fronts, and the only memorandum that I recorded here was the fact that the telegraph line makes a short cut by crossing directly eastward over their heights instead of following the tortuous course of the stream as it winds out through the chasm in a more southerly direction. This throat of the gorge, though its jaws are rather narrow, seemed to me far less impressive than that at the west. It opens directly into the plain of Khvar, and we found ourselves in a few minutes out upon its wide expanse. The transit of the Sar-Darrah Pass had taken exactly one hour and ten minutes.⁴

¹ See above, p. 123, n. 3.

² Fraser, *Narrative*, pp. 294-295.

³ Eastwick, *Journal of a Diplomat's Residence*, 2. 140.

⁴ The time on my second journey was 1 hr. 15 min.; and the third transit (on horseback) was also 1 hr. 15 min.

For the sake of completeness and by way of comparison I shall here describe the Sialak Pass, the defile running parallel to the Sar-Darrah and lying two or three miles to the north. I traversed it on my third visit, entering at the eastern end and proceeding almost to its western mouth, where the entrance had been blocked, as I stated above, by a fall of rocks three or four months before. The Sialak Pass is certainly much more striking as a defile than is the Sar-Darrah, although considerably shorter in length. I counted something over three thousand paces from the western barrier, which now closes it, to the eastern egress;¹ and it took me about forty minutes to cover the distance in each direction, first on horseback, then returning on foot, as the path in both ways was very rough.

In character the Sialak is more like a canyon, a narrow gorge with lofty, precipitous sides. The walls at the western end rise to a height of nearly a thousand feet, while those at the eastern orifice may be four or five hundred in elevation. They are formed of rugged volcanic rocks, that present wild and fantastic shapes in their curiously twisted formation, and at times they showed the same streaked effect noticeable in the Sar-Darrah. The space between these stupendous bulwarks is seldom more than from thirty to fifty feet, and often much less, because huge jagged boulders, flung down from the lofty crags, nearly shut up the path and leave scarcely a bridle way.² No cart or wagon could ever pass through the gorge, because of the insurmountable obstacles it presents. As in the Sar-Darrah, a narrow salt stream threads its way through the entire length of the defile; its water was so saline as to cause a cut in the hand to smart sharply. At one point in the gorge, where the water must formerly have been choked, it had worn away the igneous rock in such a manner that it looked as if hewn by the hand of

¹ According to Chodzko, *op. cit.*, p. 301, Rawlinson paced off the length as over twenty-five hundred paces, making twenty-six zigzag turns on the way. In such figures, much depends

on the points which one takes as the beginning and end of the gorge.

² Chodzko, p. 301, considers the space of the passage allowed as varying between thirty feet and five feet.

man. When we had almost reached the western egress, my mounted guard and I were brought to a sudden standstill, as the fallen rocks absolutely blockaded the way. The guide told me that when the storm dislodged the crag the pent-up waters had surged like a sea. The boulders were jumbled together in a chaotic mass over fifty feet high, and I hesitated for a moment to mount the insecure pile lest some unwonted move might dislodge another avalanche of stones from above. But climbing to the top with caution, I found it possible to peer over to the other side of the barrier and observe how the water, though subsiding, was still held back by the dam so unceremoniously constructed by nature at the mouth of the pass; and it was easy to understand how such a defile had originally been created by the gradually but powerfully exerted force of water. In the whole gorge there was certainly much to remind one of Pliny's description of the Caspian Gates; but — as I have already stated — it would have been sheer folly on Alexander's part to think of attempting to take troops through the Sialak Pass when the easier Sar-Darrah was at his disposal.¹

I retraced my way back out of the Sialak and was once more on the outskirts of the Plain of Khvar.

The district of Khvar (*Khvār*, pronounced Khār) is well watered and fertile and corresponds to the former Parthian territory of Choarene, mentioned in the classics,² or to the Khvarih of the Pahlavi writings,³ and the Khuvar of the Arab-Persian geographers. The latter speak of the town of Khuvar

¹ Consult again the note on p. 128 above, for a different view by Rawlinson and Chodzko.

² See Isidor of Charax, *Mansiones Parthicae*, 8; cf. also Ptolemy, 6. 5. 1, 3; Strabo, 11. 9. 1, C. p. 514; Orosius, 1. 2. 16.

³ See Bd. 12. 2, *khvārīh*. The name is found also in the last element of Παρεσχοπεῖς, Strabo, 15. 3. 1, C. p. 727; O. P. *Pātisuvariš*, NRc; Assyr.

Pa-tu-uš-ar-ra (i.e. Patuš'ara) in inscr. of Assarheddon (681-668 B.C.), see Eduard Meyer, *Zt. f. vgl. Sprachforschung*, 42. 8-9; Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, 2. 71-77 (where additional references, Arabic, Persian, and Armenian, are given); also in the Pahlavi name of the mountain Patashkhvargar (see below, p. 210), although this last point is doubted by Marquart, p. 71.

itself as populous, because enjoying the advantage of good water from the mountains, a cool climate, and fertile soil.¹ Two of the streams, the Nam Rud and the Dal-i Chai, which form branches of the larger Havla Rud, we could already see, and we knew that the station of Kishlak, or Gishlak, 'Winter Quarters,' was not far distant. Anon we could descry its walls, surrounding a few towered buildings; and after we had crossed a small bridge and driven along a narrow mud-walled street, from which could be discerned a towering beehive structure of mud and cement, exactly like the reservoir in the Sar-Darrah, our horses galloped up at 8.10 P.M. before the post-house that forms the center of Kishlak.² Here was to be our resting-place for a part of the night, even as Alexander had made his short halt on the second night in the vicinity of Kishlak, most probably at Aradan, a stage beyond toward the northeast, where are still to be seen the remains of an old fortified mound.

The caravansarai was so crowded that there was little comfort for us; and the night was broken by the incessant chatter of two Persians, who argued for a couple of hours about some bargains, whether the price should be one *shāhī* or two *shāhīs*, a fraction of a cent difference. At last in despair I cried out, *sabr kun*, 'hush up!' — and silence followed, bringing sleep for a brief space till a famished cat sprang in through a hole in the wall, dashed over our wretched bunks to grab up the small remnant we had left of a scanty supper, and disappeared through another opening. Then finally I fell asleep, dropping off into an inextricably tangled dream of Alexander, Darius, *shāhīs*, and — cats.

¹ For references to Ibn Haukal, Kazvini, and Mustaufi, see Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, p. 367; cf. also Yakut, in Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 213.

² The population of Kishlak was quoted to me as numbering about 'one hundred families,' or approximately five hundred persons.



THE STALAK PASS, OR DEFILE NORTH OF THE SAR-DARBAH PASS

CHAPTER X

THROUGH PLACES PASSED ON ALEXANDER'S ROUTE

‘ When Alexander heard that Darius had been traitorously seized, he marched with greater speed than ever.’

— ARRIAN, *Anabasis*, 3. 21. 2.

TIME for repose was short, for he who travels on Alexander's track must travel fast; so haste was our watchword. The halt which the conqueror made after passing the Gates had been somewhere in the vicinity of our very station — most likely at Aradan, as stated above; ¹ and here, on completing the second stage of his march, he had learned that Darius had been feloniously seized by his own generals.² ‘ Upon hearing this,’ as Arrian narrates, ‘ Alexander marched with greater speed than ever, taking with him only the Companions ³ and the skirmishing cavalry, and picking out the lightest and strongest of the infantry. He did not even wait for Coenus to come back from the foraging expedition, but placed Craterus in charge of the men left behind, with instructions to follow by short stages. His own men took with them nothing but their arms and rations for two days. He marched the whole night and until noon of the next day, when he gave his army a short rest.’ ⁴

This third stage of Alexander's march was the one we were about to follow, and it must have carried him along the barren

¹ See p. 138.

² Arrian, *Anabasis*, 3. 21. 1.

³ These ‘Companions’ (*ἑταῖροι*) were a body of cavalry made up from the flower of the young nobility, and they formed a sort of royal guard for the king, about twelve hundred in num-

ber and divided into eight squadrons. Compare Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders des Grossen*, pp. 96–97, Hamburg [1834], and Wheeler, *Alexander the Great*, pp. 215–216, New York, 1909.

⁴ Arrian, *Anabasis*, 3. 21. 2–3.

tract around Dah Namak, and certainly as far as Lasgird. Of this fact I became positive after my second and third journey over the route,¹ especially after traversing certain portions of the road by night, as Alexander did, and at the time of the new moon in June, that being the month in which he made the march. But on the occasion of my second journey the 'road' was regarded as unsafe because of robbers, so two mounted guards were procured, who served also as guides at points where our driver was not quite sure of his way. They performed an additional service, because I wished to make the stage on horseback, and accordingly asked one of them to give me his horse, which he gladly did in exchange for my seat in the wagon.

The crescent moon was no longer in view, but the sky was clear, and the trail was plainly visible, for the stars were shining brightly. Polaris, from its northern station, silently signaled which way we were to turn our course toward the east, Corona Borealis hung its crystal diadem aloft as it did over the head of Alexander in token of victory, whilst barbed Sagitta still pointed ominously downward at the heart of the ill-fated Darius. And so we pushed slowly forward until night melted into the blazing flame of dawn and we found ourselves at Dah Namak.²

The meaning of the name *Dah Namak* is 'Salt Village,' corresponding to its Arabic title *Ḳaṣr al-Milh*, 'Salt Castle,' in the Oriental geographers of a millennium ago, and it well deserves its appellation.³ It is a wretched hamlet, like many another on the fringe of the great salt desert of the Kavir, and it

¹ For fuller details, supplemented by the memoranda of other travelers likewise, see my promised monograph on the Caspian Gates.

² The time occupied in each journey between Teheran and Dah Namak was less than twenty-four hours, without any extended stops.

³ The designation *Ḳaṣr al-Milh* is found in the Arab-Persian geographers Ibn Rustah (p. 169), Ibn Khurdadh-bah (p. 22), Kudamah (p. 201), Istakhri (p. 201), Mukaddasi (p. 371), and Mustaufi (p. 129) — all edited by De Goeje, *Bibl. Geog. Arab.*; see Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, p. 367.

claims about seventy houses.¹ These miserable habitations are built of mud, with vaulted roofs, each joined to the other, and resembling the top of exaggerated graves. The people raise a few melons and a scant supply of wheat and barley, but our own observation was that a plentiful crop of bleached skeletons of horses and pack-animals seemed to be the chief product of the barren soil. I hope that Alexander's 'rations for two days' served him well when he reached this forlorn settlement, halting perhaps near the Kalah-i Dah Namak, or some equally wretched fortress of the village, a couple of hundred yards to the south of the present caravansarai — for I presume that the whole place was just as distressed then as it is today.² I wished that our own stay might have been shortened; but, as usual at Dah Namak, there was no fresh relay of horses to be had, and we were obliged to wait till our tired nags could get some rest.

Alexander must gladly have given orders for the trumpet to sound the march from this unattractive place, but the road itself was not a whit more inviting. Even a rill of water from an artificially dug *kanāt*³ near Husainabad tasted of brine, and the only traces of vegetation were the prickly camel-thorn and the scrubby *sipand*,⁴ although a mirage lake, which floated tantalizingly before our vision, seemed to indicate the presence of moisture in the distance. Two hours later, under a broiling sun, we drew up at a group of clay dwellings, clustered together within a walled enclosure, and known as Abdulabad, a place of about twenty-five inhabitants, with 'a few chickens and children,' as my memorandum noted. If the Greeks halted to rest their horses at this or some kindred post, where water

¹ This was the figure given me in 1910. The number 'fifty poor huts' was given twenty years before by Kennedy, *A Journey in Khorassan and Central Asia*, p. 13, London, 1891 (privately printed by Hatchards).

² A picture of the interior of the

Kalah at Dah Namak may now be seen in Lacoste, *Around Afghanistan*, p. 10, tr. by Anderson, New York, 1909.

³ An underground canal, see below, p. 159.

⁴ See above, p. 119.

was equally scarce, they must have wished that the shady oaks of Zeus at Dodona had blessed the spot. Our own horses had to be given time to rest again, for we were obliged to proceed without a fresh relay.¹

An hour more and we had crossed the bridge whose site was mentioned by Ibn Rustah, over a thousand years ago. His entry regarding the road reads as follows:—

'The road traverses salt marshland, but there is a highway across it, until you come to a bridge; crossing this and traveling on, you come to a place called the village of Mardkustan (lit. 'they killed a man'), where stands a watch-tower like a minaret, with a guard who keeps the road.'²

Here, true enough, even today a sentinel tower stands near the bridge, but there seems no longer to be so great danger of a man's being killed, as implied in the old name, for our chief guard, feeling that we were safe after passing this point, remounted his horse, giving me my seat again in the wagon, and rode back to Dah Namak, while we proceeded to Lasgird.

Lasgird is an ancient fortress town, and its location as a settlement doubtless long antedates the fourth century of our era, when it appears first to be mentioned;³ though its name in

¹ The mud fortress that served as a caravansarai across the way from the halting-place was a comparatively modern structure, although the bricks in the portal were old, as my notebook records. I have since found a picture of the doorway in Lacoste, *Around Afghanistan*, p. 6. From the roof of this gateway I saw in the distance, three or four miles back of Abdūlabād, an old fortress (*Kal'ah Kādīm*), the bricks of which were said to be very ancient.

² Ibn Rustah (903 A.D.), ed. De Goeje, *Bibl. Geog. Arab.* 7. 170. General Houtum-Schindler spoke to me about this name (*Mardkustan*) when I saw him at Teheran, June 11, 1910, after my third journey. On reaching the watch-tower one of our guides

vouchsafed the information that 'at this old Kalah, two thousand years ago, there used to be three hundred horsemen as guards!'

³ I owe to Dr. Gray a reference to the fact that Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer*, p. 260, n. 2051, Leipzig, 1880, suggests that Lasgird is identical with the name given in Syriac as *M(e?)h-Lād'gerd* of the diocese of Rai, referring to Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 1. 186 b, Rome, 1719. The allusion to the name as the chief place of the district is made in connection with the persecution of the Christians in 339-340, under Sapor II. If this identification be correct, the present form of the name itself would be proved to be more ancient than the absence of it in that form in



KISHLAK



ARADAN AND ITS FORT



WAITING FOR A FRESH RELAY OF HORSES AT DAH NAMAK



DAH NAMAK, OR 'SALT VILLAGE,' WITH THE CITADEL IN THE BACKGROUND

this particular form does not occur in the itineraries of the Oriental geographers, being there called Rās al-Kalb, or 'Dog's Head,' probably from some fancied likeness in the curious clay mound that serves as its meager citadel.¹ This remarkable elevation, apparently raised artificially, was once a stronghold that afforded a place of refuge when the Turkomans made their raids, but it is now practically deserted (fortunately, as its filth will be less), and was aptly termed a 'man-roost' by Curzon in his description.² There are some garden patches in the moat around it, cultivated by the natives, who appeared to be a kindly sort of people—though not over bright—with a

the Arab geographers would seem to imply. Yet there seems to be uncertainty in the case, as Labourt, when quoting this same Syriac name, says, 'je ne sais comment identifier cette localité dont le nom est certainement altéré'; see Labourt, *Le Christianisme dans l'empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide*, 2 ed. p. 71, n. 1, Paris, 1904. Geiger, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 391, inclines to identify Lasgird with the classic Apameia, near Rhagae (Strabo, 11. 9. 1; 11. 13. 6; Pliny, 6. 43; Isidor of Charax, 8; Ptolemy, 6. 5. 3; Ammianus Marcellinus, 23. 6. 43); but Apameia was more probably closer to the Caspian Gates, in the vicinity of Choara (Khvar), cf. Tomaschek, art. 'Apameia,' in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, 1. 2665, Stuttgart, 1894.

¹ See also Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, pp. 367–368, where references to the Arab-Persian geographers will be found. The name Ras al-Kalb appears still in the eighteenth century, disguised by mutilated spelling as 'POCHLAKABA,' in Van Mierop's diary (Hanway, 1. 358 = 3 ed. 1. 246). The Persian form *Lās-gīrd* appears, sometimes, spelled by modern travelers as

Lazgerd, Lasjird, or Lashkird. There is a town 'Lash-kird in Kerman, three days' journey from Jiraf,' which is mentioned by Yakut (tr. Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 502), but it is not to be confused with this place. A man of Lasgird told me that his town was mentioned by Firdausi in the Shah Namah as 'Lajavard,' and I have since found the reference to the 'Fort of Lazhavard' (*Dizh-i Lāzhavardīn*), in the folio edition of Mohl, *Livre des rois*, 7. 463, Paris, 1878 = small ed., 7. 375; this allusion is in a letter by Yazdagard III (632–651 A.D.) in connection with the Fort of Gunbad Kuh (near Damghan).

² Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 291; and see Fraser, *Narrative*, p. 299; Eastwick, *Journal*, 1. 145. Major Euan Smith, in his report printed in Goldsmid, *Eastern Persia*, 1. 384, London, 1876, records that 'the ancient name of this hamlet was Boklu-Kal'ah, or "the filthy fort," and it fully deserves that title still.' It is said that the offal thrown over the edges of the mound (for the houses had no drainage) added to the defence in the days of the Turkoman raids.

marked dialect in their speech. I wondered whether the Greek interpreters, who had learned Persian, found difficulty in understanding this local jargon, which a Persian told me was hard for him to follow.¹ An architectural survival from the Parthian style of building was to be noticed in the prevalence of the barrel-vault roof in the simple houses of the townfolk, although this feature still survives also in other parts of Persia.² The total number of dwellings in Lasgird was quoted at five hundred;³ but as they are spread over a considerable area, they make the town look larger than it really is. The abundance of tall trees gives a pleasant impression, but the effect is spoiled by the fact that the main approach to the place is through an odoriferous graveyard.

Lasgird and its vicinity, like other parts of Khurasan, have harrowing tales to tell of the marauding Turkomans in bygone days, or of the three thousand years of warfare between Turan and Iran. When least expected these savage horsemen would dash over the mountain border and sweep down upon the Per-

¹ See Splegel, *Eräntische Alterthumskunde*, 1. 62-63, and compare the references to the dialect of the neighboring Semnan given by Geiger, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 1. 2. 347-348, and especially Khanikoff, *Mémoire*, pp. 77-79. See also below, p. 147.

² See article 'Architecture (Persian),' in Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, 1. 763, Edinburgh, 1908.

³ The estimate of the number in a family was given to me, from several different sources, as five to a household in Khurasan, although in older books I have seen 'eight' given as a common reckoning. The estimate of five hundred houses for Lasgird agrees well with the statement made in 1866, in the journal of Nasir ad-Din Shah, *Siyāhat-i Shāh* (*Diary of a Journey to Mashad and Afghanistan*),

Teheran (lithographed), 1286 A.H. = 1869 A.D. On p. 44 he writes: 'The city of Lasgird has many gardens and nearly three hundred and fifty families, three hundred of whom reside in the fort; the other fifty, outside. Most of the inhabitants own property, are men of business, and raise cattle; their butter and cheese are fine; so also are the products of their gardens and vineyards. The fort of Lasgird is strongly built and is large and round, with three stories. Its door is small and is made of a solid stone. The people live in the upper stories of the fort; below is a reservoir. Their windows open toward the desert on the one side and toward the inside of the fort on the other.' I am indebted to Dr. Yohannan for making me a version of the entire account of the Shah's journey from Teheran to Mashad.



TYPE OF PERSIAN DONKEYS



STATION AT ABDULABAD



THE APPROACH TO LASGIRD



THE MUD FORT AT LASGIRD

sian towns and villages in the plain, leaving in their wake a trail of slaughter, rapine, and plunder as they galloped away with their booty, turning, however, like the fleeing Parthians of old, to discharge their missiles as they rode.¹ Here and there, dotting the plain, one sees among the grain-fields high towers of refuge to which the peasants fled, sickle and mattock in hand, when the dread word was brought—‘The Turkomans are coming!’ If any luckless wight failed then to reach a place of safe retreat, his lot was cruel slavery if not immediate death. The latter penalty was sometimes inflicted in a barbarous manner. The captive’s arms were bound, and after a brass plate had been heated white hot a skilful stroke of a sword smote off the victim’s head; the heated plate was clapped on the decapitated trunk to check the flow of blood, and the arms were loosened so that the body might be allowed to go through the contortions of death like a chicken. Incidents of this savagery occurred as recently as two generations ago;² but fortunately no recurrence has been possible since Russia put her stern curb on the hordes of Turan, making Transcaspia and Turkistan a part of her Asiatic domain. To-day one meets numerous Turkoman caravans moving peaceably through Khurasan.

A stretch of twenty-two miles across a broad plain, with distant mountains to the north and south, forms the stage from Lasgird to Semnan, which was made without change of horses and at a fair pace, considering the choking dust and scorching mid-day sun. Perhaps the horses were kept better up to their work through the magic virtues of a talisman which our driver carried, wrapped up in a cloth and bound to his right arm by a leather strap, to avert the Evil Eye.

We made a brief halt at Surkhah, a town situated in the

¹ Classic allusions to the Parthian mode of fighting, which was no doubt partly Turanian, are to be found in Horace, *Odes*, 1. 19. 11; 2. 13. 17; Vergil, *Georgics*, 3. 31; Ovid, *Re-*

media Amoris, 155; Plutarch, *Crassus*, 24; Justin, *Hist.* 41. 2.

² I have this on the authority of the Reverend L. F. Esselstyn, of Teheran.

plain a short three farsakhs, or an hour and a half, beyond our last station.¹ Surkhah is conceded now to be a larger place than Lasgird and much better supplied with water and shade, while the ripe and yellow fields of grain on the outskirts looked well cultivated, and the melons grown here are celebrated.² I noticed also some architectural remains that appeared to be old—a large vaulted structure of brick, below the level of the street, showing signs of antiquity, and the *Burj*, or 'Fort,' giving likewise an impression of age. Surkhah might possibly come into consideration as a rival to Lasgird's claim for the honor of being Alexander's third halting-place, if we only had more material to prove its antiquity.³ In any event the Macedonian troops spent only from noon till evening in whichever place it was.

For a considerable distance beyond Surkhah the road was perfectly level. Though somewhat gravelly at times, and always dusty, it was suitable for making good time, if one was in haste over these three farsakhs; and I noted that it would be excellent for a night march. It was the same heat through which we had been traveling that made Alexander avoid a march by day, for he evidently started on his fourth stage at evening, having given his army 'a short rest'—according to Arrian—'and went on all night and reached at daybreak the camp from which Bagistanes had set out to meet him,' bring-

¹ Surkhah is Van Mierop's 'DESORGE' (i.e. Dah Surkhah) in *Hanway*, 1. 358 = 3 ed. 1. 246.

² Shah Nasir ad-Din's *Diary* (p. 47) speaks of the melons and records the number of families at Surkhah as 'nearly four hundred' in 1866. Four years earlier (1862) Eastwick, *Journal*, 2. 146, put the number at 'five hundred'; he mentions the wheat and cotton grown at Surkhah, and describes the fortress as having walls twelve feet thick and as capable of garrisoning two thousand men.

³ Possibly Surkhah is disguised in the Arabic form *S r h*, i.e. *Sur[kh]ah* (compare the variants), in Ibn Rustah (903 A.D.), ed. De Goeje, 7. 170, and in the mutilated *S i r j* (?read *Surkh[ah]*) in Kudamah (880 A.D.), ed. De Goeje, 6. 201. The latter name is read as 'Syrej' by Sprenger, *Post- und Reiserouten des Orients*, Heft 1, p. 13, in *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, vol. 3, no. 3, Leipzig, 1864. There is no town except Surkhah between Lasgird and Semnan.



VIEW OF SENNAR, SHOWING ITS MOSQUE AND MINARET

ing the news that Darius had been seized.¹ The site of this encampment — ‘the Parthian village Thara’ it was called by Justin — we could not yet have reached; for, as explained elsewhere,² it must have been situated somewhat beyond the flourishing town of Semnan, which we were now approaching after a drive of two hours across a rough and stony stretch of road with a slight descent towards the last.

Semnan (Samnān, or Simnān) is a place of high antiquity, being mentioned by Ptolemy as *Semina*,³ and appearing in the Oriental geographers as a town noteworthy because of the rivulets of water running through its streets, its manufacture of soft stuffs for handkerchiefs, and especially for its sweet paste made from almonds and figs.⁴ The natives themselves pronounce the name of the town as ‘Semnoon’; and although this pronunciation is not especially peculiar, as *-ūn* for *-ān* is common in other parts of Persia, their speech has as marked an individuality as has the vernacular at Lasgird.⁵

In situation Semnan lies somewhat low, being reached on either side by a long descending gravelly plain, brown and barren, and backed on the north by mountains not a dozen miles away, though the range on the south is more distant.⁶ The appearance of the town, as one draws near to it, is picturesque and attractive because of the cultivation and the abundant presence of green contrasting with the arid waste. A high minaret peers out from a mass of verdure, and near it

¹ Arrian, *Anabasis*, 3. 21. 3, and Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 5. 13. 6.

² See Jackson, *Caspiae Portae*, where Justin (11. 15. 1) will be found quoted with the various other authorities on the subject.

³ Ptolemy, *Geography*, 6. 5. 3, Σήμινα (ed. Nobbe, 2. 95, Leipzig, 1887).

⁴ See Yakut (who visited Semnan about 1220 A.D.) and Ahmad Razi, both quoted in Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 317; and compare Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, p. 368. Perhaps

an allusion to the celebrated ‘tea-cakes’ is contained in this reference to the paste.

⁵ A paragraph by Geiger on the Semnan dialect, with a full list of writers who have discussed the subject in detail, will be found in Geiger and Kuhn, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 1. 2. 346–348. See also below, p. 149.

⁶ On the location of Semnan see Fraser, *Narrative*, p. 800, and Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 290.

rises a dome crowned with a blue cupola, while not far away stands a towered building that lends height to the effect.

The post-house to which we galloped up was built on the made road just before entering the town, and proved to be a structure of considerable merit, not the ordinary dilapidated affair to which one becomes distressingly accustomed. In many ways it reminded me of the tall baths and caravansarais to be seen at Isfahan and Kashan.¹ The man in charge was polite and attentive, and obligingly gave us permission to drive at once through the town before returning to unhitch our tired horses and put up for the night.

The town is surrounded by the familiar mud ramparts, turreted by bastions, and penetrated by gates decorated with fancy tiling. The portal that belongs to the Citadel, which extends out from the wall on the northwest side, is called *Darvāz-i Ark*, 'Citadel Gate,' and is gaudily capped by a painted arch portraying the combat between the hero Rustam and the Div-i Safid, or 'White Demon,' as described in the national epic of Iran.²

At this point it may be worth while to include in translation a passage from Shah Nasir ad-Din's diary in regard to the Citadel and to Semnan as it appeared to him on the occasion of his visit in the spring of 1865. The paragraph is as follows: —

'The Citadel was built by Haji Bahman Mirza Baha ad-Daulah, and has a strong fortress and bulwarks. Inside the garrison are several small houses, mostly ruined. The rooms of the Citadel are private chambers and reception rooms; there is a garden, with two or three dilapidated chambers and a spacious round bath. The court of the inner apartments has two large tanks, north and south; and on the east and west ends of the court there are several chambers and upper rooms. In many respects the Citadel resembles the Castle of the Kajars at Teheran. Within it is built a stage [for the performance of religious plays during the Muharram], and daily a religious play is held here by the order of the Shah.'³

¹ Such as those pictured in Coste, Paris, 1876; Warner, *Shāhnāma*, 2. *Monuments modernes de la Perse*, pl. 59-62; see also pp. 223-224, below.
45, 56, Paris, 1867.

² From Nasir ad-Din Shah's *Siyā-*

³ Mohl, *Livre des rois*, 1. 425-427, *hat*, pp. 48-49 (see above, p. 144, n. 8).

The Shah comments favorably on the city and its buildings, remarks that it is divided into eleven quarters, and makes a shrewd observation on the patois of its inhabitants. In this local idiom he sees a composite of the speech of Mazandaran, Khurasan, and Irak, just as the population appears to show a threefold amalgamation of type because bordering on these three districts.¹

The bazars of Semnan, as we drove through them, appeared to be fairly good, though not especially remarkable, and some of them were arched over so as to give the advantages of covered passages, as in most large towns. In the heart of the bazar is the old minaret of the principal, or 'Assembly,' mosque (*Minār-i Masjid-i Jāmi'*), which we had seen in the distance, and which is noteworthy because its cagelike top has been preserved.² It is built of brick, and it towers a hundred feet above the structure to which it is attached. The mosque, now in a ruined condition, must be old, for Fraser observed that an inscription records that it was built by Tamerlane's son, Shah Rukh, in 880 A.H. (= 1475 A.D.), though possibly Shah Rukh may only have rebuilt it, as it seems to be older than some baths near by, which bear an earlier date, 566 A.H. (= 1170 A.D.).³

Two of the public squares near the dervish colleges struck me as being too insignificant to deserve more than a mere mention. On the other hand, the city can boast of a large and dignified plaza, a great court in front of the *Masjid-i Shāh*, or 'Mosque of the Shah,' paved with brick and flanked on each side by edifices as noble as the mosque itself. The huge portal that dominates the structure which faces the mosque is particularly elegant, being decorated with handsome inlaid tiles

¹ See the lithograph edition of the diary, p. 50, to which reference has already been made. The Shah's observation on the Semnan dialect was cited by Dorn, as quoted in Geiger and Kuhn, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 1. 2. 848.

² This is commonly spoken of as the Friday Mosque, because of the special services held on that day.

³ See Fraser, *Narrative*, p. 303.

of blue, yellow, and black, set off by arabesque texts in Kufic script.

This chief mosque, to which reference has just been made, owes its name 'Mosque of the Shah' to the fact that Fath Ali Shah caused it to be erected about the year 1826.¹ The striking effect of the rich façade, with its panel niches of bright tiles, the two-storied arches that balance it on the right and the left, and the high-vaulted arch which is the main feature of the edifice, and which is crowned by a cupola from whose height the muazzin calls to prayer, are all features familiar to every one who has given attention to Muhammadan architecture. A Moslem collegiate institution, the Madrasah Sardar Khan, is attached to the mosque, and opens on a small square that calls for no further reference.

Our guide among these ecclesiastical buildings on the occasion of my second visit was an intelligent Moslem, who was extremely obliging, but who appeared not to have been satisfied with the gratuity given for his trouble, since he had to distribute much of the bakshish as hush-money to certain clamorers in the crowd. No further attention was paid to the matter, but on returning to the post-station I received word that the chief of police would like to have me call. I joked about the courtesy, thinking it to be a *pro forma* piece of local attention, and sent Mirza Safar to present my compliments, and to thank him for the notice taken of our visit. Safar came back, saying that the official would call, and a most hearty welcome he received. An informal chat ensued, and when the conversation turned to international affairs, a pleasant opportunity was given to show him some of the governmental recommendations for our journey. I gave the matter no thought then or later, until, after my return to Teheran, a friend said: 'I see you've been figuring in the Persian newspapers, and that

¹ The date may be obtained from Major Euan Smith's report of 'The Perso-Afghan Mission,' given by Gold-

smid, *Eastern Persia*, 1. 384. The information I received was only approximate.

سمنان - پر بروز عصر یکه مسیحی
 مابکی از شاگردان مدرسه بنکه دیبائی بایک
 دستکار. درشکه پستی وارد سمنان و بازار وارد
 شده اسامی انگلیز را نوشته اند به مسجد شاه
 رفته عکس مسجد و تکایا برداشته اقتصاد
 الملك رئیس نظمیہ حواشی نمود برای پاره
 تحقیقات احوال ایشان بنظمیہ آمده چند کاغذ
 سفارش نامه از میو میوئور همراه داشت
 که بر رئیس پست خانه دامغان توصیه در مساعدت
 حرکت آنها شده بعد از تحقیقات رئیس
 نظمیہ بمن دامغان حرکت نمودند

A NEWSPAPER CLIPPING ABOUT THE AUTHOR'S
 VISIT TO SEMNAN
 (From the *Iran-i No*, June 6, 1910, No. 225)



GATEWAY TO THE CITADEL AT SEMNAN

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Mosque of FATH ALI SHAH AT SEMNAN

reports of your doings in taking pictures within the sacred shrine of a mosque have been despatched from Semnan.' I confessed that my transgression had been committed quite innocently, for I had simply followed where my Muhammadan guide had conducted me ; but I then understood the reason for the murmurs of the crowd.

Yet it speaks well in general for the growing spirit of toleration in Persia that no attempt at violence was offered because of the unwitting offence, and also for the progressive tendency shown in the immediate cognizance of the affair by the Semnan police—an unwonted compliment had been paid indeed—while it likewise proved the spirit of enterprise on the part of the youthful press in Persia to report such incidents in Teheran, besides whispering them along the route by word of mouth. Considering the circumstances, I value rather highly the photograph which I secured of the Mosque of Fath Ali Shah and which is here reproduced.

The evening at our *manzil* was the most comfortable and pleasant we had enjoyed on the trip. The native merchants that chanced to be halting with their caravans were polite and kindly disposed, treating us with an easy social air that made us feel more at home ; the master of the station busied himself with providing the best viands that he could—a simple fare, but none the less tasty—especially a liberal supply of tea-bread (*nūn-i chai*), a kind of rusk or cake for which Semnan enjoys a particular renown. The air was mild and soft, and the long shafts of moonlight found their way through the trees that bordered the adjoining garden—a garden vocal with the bulbul and noisy with the swift rush of a babbling brook in which we gladly washed off the thick dust of the day's journey. But all was changed with the morning light and the first beams of the sun. The stream proved to be a magic rill, for when we sought it towards dawn, it had disappeared, having actually swept itself out of existence, leaving a bed as dry as the powdery sand of the plain which we had washed off six

hours before. We had passed through the enchantment of a Persian (if not of an Arabian) night, and the *genii* had tricked us as we slept.

The moonlight in the garden,
The whispers in the air,
The nightingale's soft trilling
That told of love so fair —

The rose that breathed forth perfume
To boughs so hushed and still,
The water of the fountain
That plashed its merry fill —

The stream that, overflowing,
Had rushed with margins torn —
Ah, magic of enchantment —
All vanished in the morn !

CHAPTER XI

THROUGH THE MOUNTAIN PASS OF AHUAN

‘ When fair morn orient in heaven appeared.’

— MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, 6. 524.

THE youthful sun, which had been tipping the mountain tops with silver, transmuted its molten stream into a flood of gold as we galloped out on to the plain in a northeasterly direction towards the mountain pass of Ahuan, seven farsakhs, or twenty-five miles, distant and two thousand five hundred feet higher than Semnan.¹

The road was stony at first, and some of the cobble blocks were of a size that would have made difficult an advance with cavalry; but Alexander may have chosen a somewhat easier route by striking off eastward to avoid the hill-climb altogether, thus passing the village corresponding to the modern Ala on the way to what must have been in ancient times the site of Hecatompylos.²

In character the first five miles of the stretch were level until the gradual ascent began. There were no streams to be crossed; and the track, in the course of an hour, became so

¹ This elevation above Semnan is given by Houtum-Schindler, *Routen in Chorassān*, p. 218. The distance to Ahuan was calculated by Fraser (*Narrative*, p. 309) as ‘26 or 28 miles,’ and occupied eight hours, on Dec. 27, 1821; Ferrier (*Caravan Journeys*, p. 68) states ‘six parasangs — nine hours and a half’; Eastwick (*Journal*, 2. 150) reckoned ‘about 24 miles’ and took nine and a half hours, on Aug. 17, 1862; O’Donovan (*Merv*, 1. 381)

gave ‘24 miles’ (time occupied in transit not given); Curzon (*Persia*, 1. 256) has ‘24’ miles; Kennedy (*A Journey in Khorassan*, p. 16, London, 1891) gave the same distance and took 4 hrs. 10 min. My own estimate was nearer 30 miles, the time in the transit on the three journeys being (1) four hours and ten minutes, (2) five hours and fifty minutes, (3) seven hours (the latter at night, and partly at a walk).

² See below, Chap. XIII.

much better that our progress was comparatively easy, though not so swift as the bounding speed of some gazelles that scoured over the plain in timid flight at the clatter of our horses' hoofs and the rattle of our wheels.

Various points along the plain, as well as some localities on our journey of the next two days, were marked by small hillocks or mounds. Though much worn away by the action of the elements, they occasionally showed traces of the remains of mud walls that had served to make them places of temporary refuge in the time of Turkoman forays; though they are sometimes explained, on the basis of local tradition, as mounds on which stood temples of the 'Fire-worshippers.'¹

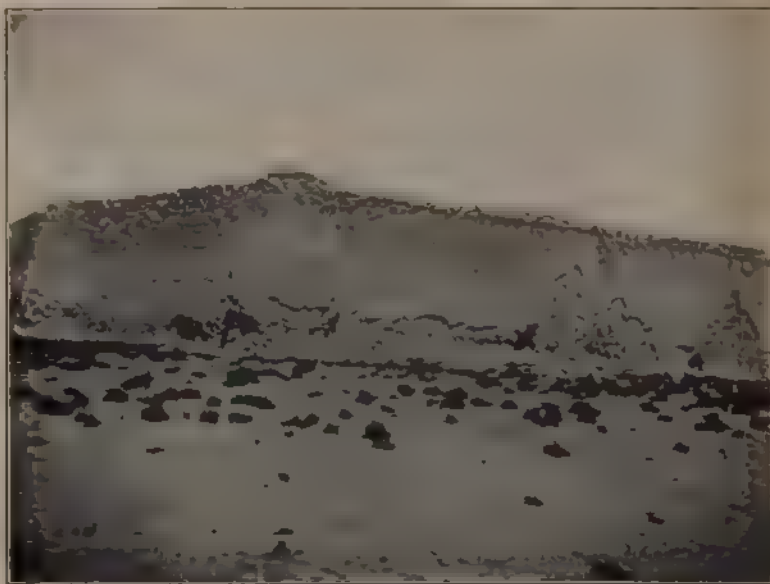
Before another hour the barren rolling reach had gradually merged into the dip of a verdant valley near the station of Surkhanah. This halting-place, which has supplanted the station of Chasht-khvaran, I remember the better because of the green grass in the vicinity, over which the blue eyes of a wild weed peeped laughingly. When one has long been traveling over tracts of arid waste, the smile of a flower, or the welcome waved by a nodding tree, seems cheering indeed. Nature appeared to have imparted somewhat more of sunshine to the half dozen peasants around the station; for the tot of a boy who took charge of our horses—the Persians are born on horseback—seemed more alert than the men at most of the places, and our relay was quickly brought.

Over hill and dale our advance was made, and the road up the mountain ascent was good, nor oversteep, although I can imagine that the pass must be extremely difficult in winter.² From time to time a huge bolder of volcanic rock stood grim guard as a sentry to watch, though not to bar, the path. Owing to a slight change in the direction of the post-route, which has

¹ On these tumuli consult O'Donovan, *Merv*, 1. 383, and Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 289.

² Fraser (*Narrative*, pp. 308–309) found it very hard on Dec. 27, 1821,

and Houtum-Schindler (*Routen in Chorassân*, p. 318) speaks of it as 'sehr schwer.' My own transits were made in May–June, when travel was easy.



BASTIONS OF THE RIBAT, OR FORTIFIED CARAVANSARAI, AT AHUAN



FRONT OF THE RIBAT OF ANUSHIRVAN AT AHUAN

made a short cut in recent years, I failed to see a landmark for which I was on the lookout. This is 'the ruined caravansarai' mentioned by Fraser, 'the ruins of a caravansarai' alluded to by Captain Clerk, or the 'sarai' marked on Holdich's map as a place that has 'ruins.'¹ This spot I had formerly thought might be possibly identical with the position of 'Thara, a village of the Parthians,' where Darius was thrown into chains;² but I have since become doubtful about the matter, especially after my second and third journey over the track, as has been mentioned above.³ The only name that had any distant similarity with Thara, as far as I could learn from the natives, was *At-Tārī* (the prefix *At* being the article), located half a farsakh distant from Chasht-khvaran; but the likelihood did not commend itself to me, for my informants spoke of At-Tari as a modern place, though adding that there were old ruins near Chasht-khvaran. These considerations incline me the more to the view that on this particular stage Alexander pursued the lower route, via Ala.

The sun was about five hours high in the heavens before we reached the old ruined fortress of stone at Ahuan.⁴ This small settlement (whose name is variously spelt as Ahuwan, Aghivan, Aheaiyoon, and Aheeyon)⁵ owes its designation, in the popular mind at least, to the gazelles (*āhūān*) that are found in numbers in its vicinity. A legend accounts for their presence unmolested, and it is worth repeating:—

¹ See Fraser, *Narrative*, p. 308; Clerk, *Notes in Persia*, in *JRGS.* 31. 40; and Holdich, *Map of Persia*.

² See above, p. 147, and cf. Justin, *Philipp.* 11. 15. 1. In 1908 I had advanced the theory that Sarai may represent Thara, in an article in *Dastur Hoshang Memorial Volume*, Bombay, 1911.

³ See p. 153.

⁴ For the time occupied in transit see above, p. 153, n. 1.

⁵ For such variants see the works cited above, p. 153, n. 1. I have spelt the name phonetically, as from the plural of *āhū*, 'gazelle.' Ahuan, or Ahuvan, is simply mentioned in the itineraries given by the Arab-Persian geographers, e.g. Ibn Rustah, ed. De Goeje, *Bibl. Geog. Arab.* 8. 170; consult also Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, p. 366.

‘The sainted Mohammed Riza, passing through the village one day, met a huntsman who had just caught a deer. At sight of the saint the animal became gifted with speech, and besought him to allow her to return to her young ones, at home, who would perish for want of nourishment if she were kept a prisoner. Thereupon the saint ordered the huntsman to let her go, promising to go bail for her reappearance. The huntsman obeyed, but as the deer never returned, he complained to the saint, who then, by force of prayer, summoned back the animal to its captor, and it was kept sacred by him ever after.’¹

A pretty captive fawn, which was brought to us as a present next evening at Damghan, may have had a like tale to tell; but we hoped that its captor gave it its liberty again in return for the bakshish which he received for that purpose.

Lonely Ahuan has but a single street, and that a simple one without a shop worthy of mention. Yet there are two structures of genuine interest. One of these, the more modern, is a large brick caravansarai, situated at the western end of the street, on the north side of the thoroughfare, and popularly supposed to be the work of Shah Abbas the Great (1587–1629), whose name is somewhat justly associated in the minds of the people with any large caravansarai that happens to be a couple of centuries old;² though a different tradition ascribes its construction to his next successor but one, the Safavid ruler Shah Sulaiman (1666–1694).³ Whoever built it, the edifice has well stood the test of time, and is still used by the merchants and pilgrims that traverse this route.

The northerly structure is situated at the easterly end of the street, on its north side, and is called *Ribāt-i Nūshīrvān*, or ‘Fortified Station of Anushirvan the Just.’ This Sasanian

¹ This quotation is from Major Euan Smith’s narrative in Goldsmid, *Eastern Persia*, 1. 383, and is repeated in substance by Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 290; the legend is merely alluded to by Eastwick, *Journal*, 2. 150, who makes Ali the hero of the tale.

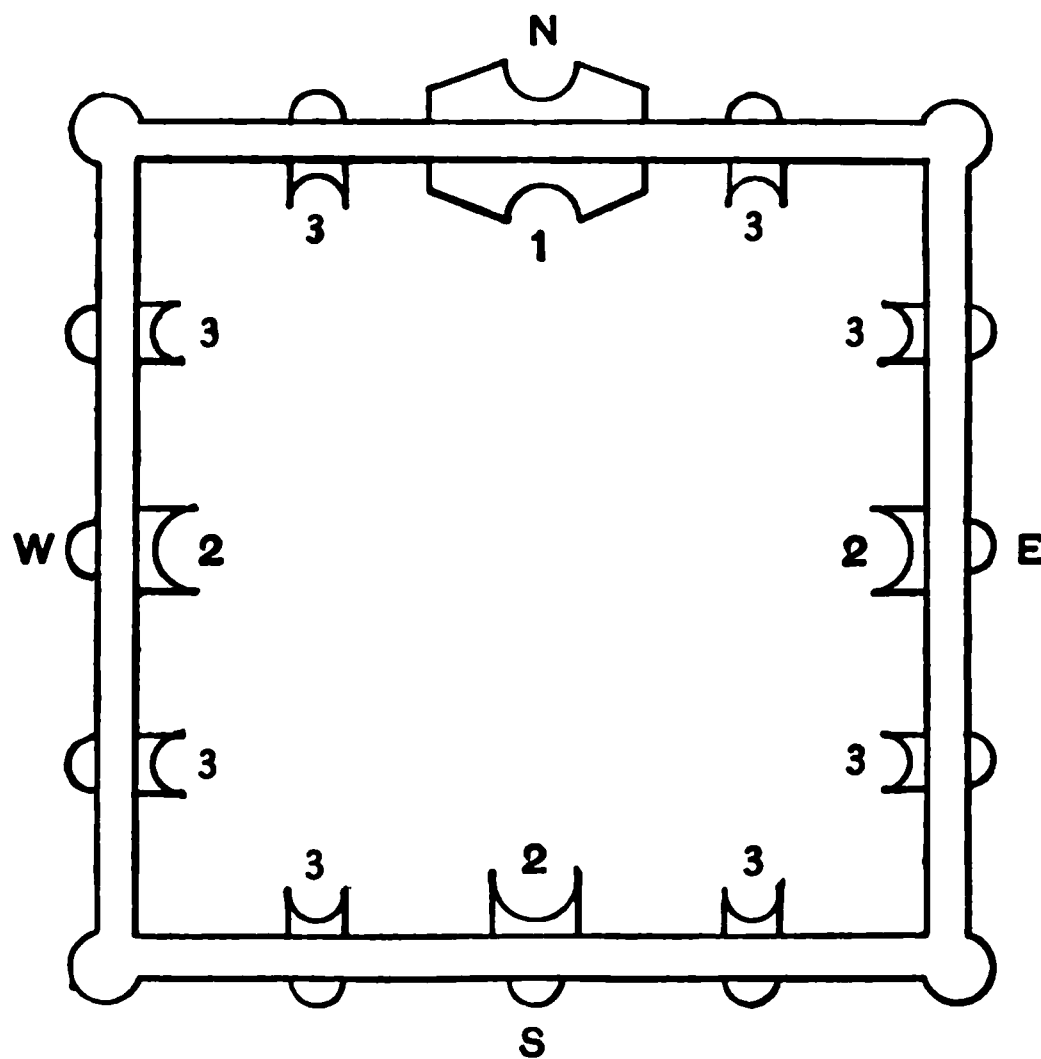
² I find that Eastwick (2. 151) like-

wise heard it ascribed to Shah Abbas, as I did. On the popularity of Shah Abbas as a builder, see Horn, *Geschichte Irans in islamitischer Zeit*, in *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 584.

³ The name of Sulaiman is given by Euan Smith (*op. cit.* 1. 383) and is repeated by Curzon (1. 290).

ruler, with whom we have already become acquainted in an earlier chapter, is better known to the West as Chosroes, or Khusrau I (531–579 A.D.), who governed his realm with a firm and just hand; and it is not unlikely that the stronghold actually owed its origin to him, to protect the caravans against the Turanians. The natives always speak of it as a *ribāt*, 'a keep, or fortified station,' and not as a simple caravan-sarai.

The structure consists of an enclosure, more than ninety yards square, with a single entrance through its northern front.¹ In shape it resembles the large caravan-sarais that are familiar in Persia, but it is built of stone, not of mud and clay. The



RIBAT OF ANUSHIRVAN AT AHUAN

(1. Portal, with large rooms above. — 2. Large archways in the sides. — 3. Smaller arches, with rooms.)

stones used in its construction are the cobbles which are found in the hills near by; and the walls, raised to a height of twenty or thirty feet, are enormously thick. Signs of a coping of cement and mortar are still to be traced at points along the top, and here and there as a finish on the sides. The corners are strengthened by heavy bastions re-enforced by kindred roundels, three on each side (except on the north, where there are but two), forming a total of fifteen such defences. The main

¹ I paced off the front and sides roughly as follows: N. (front), 97 paces; E., 90; S., 90; W., 92 paces.

entrance, a high vaulted arch in the middle of the northern wall, must once have been a proud portal. It is built of stone and bricks, with cement and mortar, but the plaster that gave it a finish has worn off with the ages, and the few traces that remain are defaced by modern scrawls, contrasting strongly with the general antiquity of the crumbling pile. This gateway formed the *bālā khānah*, or 'high room,' occupied for ages by the more affluent wayfarers and members of the caravan trains, while travelers of more slender means sought accommodations in the chambers below.

The interior of the structure is some forty-five yards square, and has on each side large archways which match, though in a lesser degree, the main portal, and which are balanced to right and left by minor arches leading into the smaller chambers for the camel drivers and ordinary men of the caravan. It was not strange that when last I saw the Ribat at evening—the rocky hill forming a rough background behind it as the sun went down—Omar's image of the 'batter'd Caravanserai' floated before my vision, and fancy conjured up a picture of how Sultan after Sultan with his pomp must have abided his destined hour and gone his way out from these lonely walls since the time of Anushirvan the Just, nearly fifteen centuries ago. Yes, and how many must have been the long lines of caravans that were glad at nightfall to reach the safe shelter of the court, now strewn with dirt and rubbish, and overgrown with stubbly weeds. The distant bells of a camel train were even at the moment making deep intonations in the quiet air, stirred by the wings of the birds that sought cover from the clouds that were gathering dark and cold.

A shortage of horses is typical of solitary Ahuan, and an hour's sojourn was enforced upon us before we could proceed with the same relay, though the steeds cantered off at a good pace, now up and now down, till they reached the plain again, which was level as a threshing-floor. Its surface was scarce broken, save by the hummocks of earth raised around the



A CAPTIVE GAZELLE



CARAVANSARAI OF SHAH ABBAS AT ARVAN



INTERIOR OF THE RIBAT OF ANUSHIRVAN AT ARVAN

mouths of the giant mole-hills where the underground channels of the *kanāts* came to the surface. These conduits, so common in Persia, lead the water from the neighboring hills, and are mentioned in this very vicinity (the ancient Hecatompylos being not far distant) by the Greek historian Polybius in the second century B.C., in connection with the war between Antiochus the Great and the Parthian king Arsaces in 212-205 B.C. Arsaces believed that his opponent from the West would not venture to invade Parthia, especially on account of the scarcity of water which prevailed in this territory.

‘For in this tract of country there is no water appearing on the surface, though there are many subterranean channels which have well-hafts sunk to them at spots in the desert unknown to persons unacquainted with the districts. A true account of these channels has been preserved among the natives to the effect that, during the Persian ascendancy, they granted enjoyment of the profits of the land to the inhabitants of some of the waterless districts for five generations, on condition of their bringing fresh water in; and that, there being many large streams flowing down Mount Taurus, these people at infinite toil and expense constructed these underground channels through a long track of country, in such a way that the very people who now use the water are ignorant of the sources from which the channels were originally supplied.’¹

The entire aspect of the region is precisely the same today as when Polybius wrote, and there is not a single real halting-place to be found on the road for the entire seven farsakhs to Gushah, which lies hardly more than a score of miles away from the presumable site of Hecatompylos.

Gushah is a settlement of about twenty dwellings, a post-house and a sarai being the chief buildings. The high volcanic range of mountains to the north thrusts out a spur or two that nearly reach the hamlet, bringing a boon in the form of a slender stream of water that is led past the houses, and forms a border of green in this place, which is suitable only for

‘A Moment’s Halt — a momentary taste
Of Being from the Well amid the Waste.’

¹ Polybius, *Histories*, 10. 28, tr. Shuckburgh, 2. 27, London, 1889.

Omar Khayyam must surely have known some place as little suited as was this for any but the briefest tarrying.

As we sped forward over the flat expanse towards Daulatabad and Damghan, we could see, at the distance of some miles to the south, the dust-buried remains of a series of villages and small towns that had once made up the metropolis of the ancient district of Comisene, and that are still called *Shahr-i Kūmish*, or 'City of Kumish,' by the natives, a site which I visited later and shall describe further on. Anon the somewhat sandy stretch that we were traversing was brightened by cheery wheat-fields, not far from Saïdabad, although this village itself was hardly more than a study in mud walls, like several others of its neighbors dotting the plain, which here becomes fertile. Among these settlements Daulatabad, already mentioned, attracted our attention by its waving grain and its extensive fortified enclosure, whose clay walls, however, showed by their lack of repair that their need was no longer felt as a protection against Turkoman marauders.

Two hours more and we caught sight of the wide-spreading city of Damghan, above whose low walls rose rich foliage to offset the gray clay of its antique citadel and the yellowish dome of its principal mosque; while two towering minarets, at some distance from each other in the city, served as guide-posts to its gates and told us we had reached the goal of our long day's journey of thirteen hours.



AT THE STATION OF GUSHAH



FORTRESS WALLS OF DAULATABAD

CHAPTER XII

DAMGHAN AND ITS ENVIRONS

‘They arrived at a city which is called Damghan, situated in a plain and surrounded by an earthen wall, with a castle at the end.’

—CLAVIJO, *Embassy to Timour Bey in 1403–6*, p. 102.

GIRT with a cincture of low walls, and with shoulders mantled in green brocade as it lifts its turret-crowned head above the plain to convey to the mountains near by an acknowledgment of their rich tribute of water, Damghan presents at first sight something regal in its mien. The citadel that does duty as challenging sentry seems forbidding; but a courier stream dashes out from beneath a four-arched bridge to extend a welcome to the dusty traveler and to conduct him to a fairly comfortable rest-house, where he soon feels at home in the old town.¹

Few visitors have said anything in favor of Damghan, presumably because of the sense of dilapidation which the place imparts; but there is plenty of life and activity in this antique center of civilization; it is full of associations with the past, and I found much to interest me in the two visits which I paid to it.

A long historic background lies behind the city. For a thousand years Damghan has been the chief town of the district of Kumish, or Kumis (the classic Komisene, or Comisene).² It appears gradually to have supplanted the old ‘City

¹ Beside the four regular arches of this bridge a fifth smaller opening breaks through, as shown in my photograph. The bridge is the same as the one mentioned by Truilhier (*Mémoire*, p. 150) a hundred years ago.

² References to Comisene (Komisene) are found in several classic authors: Ptolemy, 6. 5. 1, ‘that part of Parthia which is next to Hyrcania is called Komisene, and under it Parthyene; after that Choarene and Parau-

of Kumis' (*Shahr-i Kūmis*[*h*]), whose outlines can be traced today in mound after mound of sand-buried ruins about fifteen miles southeast of the town, spread over the probable site of the ancient Parthian capital, Hecatompylos, as will be explained in the next chapter. The names Kumis and Damghan are used at times synonymously in certain itineraries of the earlier Oriental geographers, and the history of the two places is practically the same, even though it is necessary to make a topographical distinction between them, and to regard Damghan as having succeeded to the rank and title of Kumis as the principal city of the district of that name, just as Teheran has superseded Rai, its own more ancient neighbor.¹ In tracing the history of the city it will, therefore, be found convenient to combine the allusions to Damghan, Kumis, and Hecatompylos at different periods as referring practically to one and the same center.

The 'City of Kumis' is fabled to have been used by the accursed King Azh-Dahak, of Babylon, as a harem when he ruled over Iran twenty-six centuries before the Christian era, if we are to believe the statement in a Pahlavi book of the ninth century of our chronology.² His reign lasted a thou-

tikene'; Strabo, 11. 9. 1 (p. 514); 'Comisene and Chorene are among the parts of Parthia'; Isidor of Charax, 8-10, 'Thence (after Choarene and before Hyrcania) is Comisene, 68 schoeni; in it there are 8 villages, in [each of] which is a halting-place, but there is no city.' In connection with the classical references throughout this chapter and the next, I am indebted to my friend and former pupil, Dr. Charles J. Ogden, of Columbia University. See also Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, pp. 71-72.

¹ This is at least the view I hold with regard to the problem of Kumis and Damghan, as will be further developed in the next chapter (p. 177, n. 2).

A slightly different view, though agreeing in the main with the points here presented, may be found in Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, pp. 365, 369.

² This statement is found in the Pahlavi *Shatrōihā-i Airān*, 18, and reads: *šatrōistān Kūmīš panj-burj Až-i Dahāk paš šapstān kart; mānišm Pahlavigān(?) ano [tamman] būš [yahvūnt] pa[pavan] xūtāih Yazdakart-i Šāhpūhrān kart*, 'Azh-Dahak the ruler made the City of Kumish, of five citadels, his harem; (and) under the reign of Yazdagard the residence of the Champions (? or Parthians or Parsis) was made there.' See *Pahlavi Texts*, I, *Shatrōihā-i Airān*, § 18, ed. Jamasp-Asana, p. 20, Bombay,

sand years, according to story, and we can imagine how the Persians pictured in fancy the scenes of gruesome revel when this foreign monster, from whose shoulders two devouring serpents grew, came to visit his 'night-abode' (as the Pahlavi word *shapstān*, 'harem,' really means) in their terrified district at Kumis. A still earlier date could be assigned to Damghan itself on the authority of Mustaufi, as he ascribes the origin of the town to the mythical Hoshang, the first king of Iran, supposedly 3400 B.C.¹ In harmony with these fanciful tales ran the imagination of the epic poet Firdausi when he told how, in the reign of Kai Kubad (1000 B.C.), the valiant Rustam vanquished the Turanian invader Afrasiab, and forced him to retreat by the way of Damghan to the river Oxus in Turkistan.²

The vicissitudes of the city in war have been varied throughout the ages. Armies have marched repeatedly across its track to victory or defeat, and have left in the people's memory the sound of their measured tread. From history we know that in 330 B.C. Alexander must have passed by the site of the present Damghan on his way to Tage (now Tāk) and Hyrcania, after celebrating at Hecatompylos his victory over the dead Darius.³ Legend still keeps up a story of the visit of the Macedonian hosts; for an intelligent native told me a folk-tale about how 'Iskandar (Alexander) had spent six months in Damghan with an army of 200,000 men, but in spite of that the price of provisions had never risen during

1897, or § 19 of the same work, ed. Blochet, *Liste géographique des villes de l'Iran*, in *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie*, ed. Maspero, vol. 17, pp. 166, 168, 173, Paris, 1895. Consult also Modi, *Aiyādgār-i Zarīrān and Shatrōihā-i Airān*, transl., pp. 69, 147, Bombay, 1899, and Marquart, *Ērān-shahr*, pp. 71-72. For the traditional date of Azh-Dahak, see Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 180.

¹ See Mustaufi, cited by Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 223, n. 1.

² See Mohl, *Le Livre des rois* (folio ed.), 1. 470-471, Paris, 1838 (=1. 372, smaller ed., Paris, 1876), 'Les Turcs se retirèrent devant des Mages, et leur armée se rendit à Damghan; de là ils tournèrent vers le Djihoun.'

³ See next note and also below, p. 183.

his entire stay!'¹ It is to be hoped that the favored inhabitants enjoyed a similar immunity a century later, when Antiochus the Great followed in Alexander's footsteps on an expedition through Parthia in 209 B.C.² The alarums of war were not to be stilled; for a thousand years afterwards, in 885 A.D., the ruler of Tabaristan, on the north, marched an army 'from Gurgan (Hyrkania) to Damghan' and thence to Rai, but met with a dire overthrow on the latter field.³ This disaster was perhaps portended by a fearful earthquake which visited Damghan some years before,⁴ only to be followed by a train of fire and blood left by the savage Mongol hordes under Chingiz Khan between 1219 and 1227.⁵ Nor was Tamerlane, that mighty 'Scourge of God,' to be outdone in leaving at Damghan some trace of his ferocity when he burst across the Oxus into Iran in 1381, although this time his wrath was vented upon a band of White Tartars whom he had transplanted from Turkey and Syria to Damghan, where they revolted against him. He left outside of the city four towers of their heads, plastered in mud, to serve as a monument of his vengeance, and two of these ghastly turrets, 'so high that a man could scarcely throw a stone over them,' were seen still standing, with remains of the other two, when Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo passed through Damghan on Thursday, July 17, 1404, on an embassy from the Spanish court to Tamerlane's capital at Samarkand.⁶

It is not strange that atrocities like these left wounds hard

¹ It is not improbable that Alexander actually left some soldiers quartered in the vicinity of Hecatompylos, as Curtius (6. 2. 15) says 'he had a stationary camp there' (*ibi stativa rex habuit*), even though he allowed the main body of his troops to stay only 'for some days' (*ἐπὶ τινὰς ἡμέρας*), according to Diodorus (17. 75). See also Zolling, *Alexanders Feldzug*, pp. 110-111.

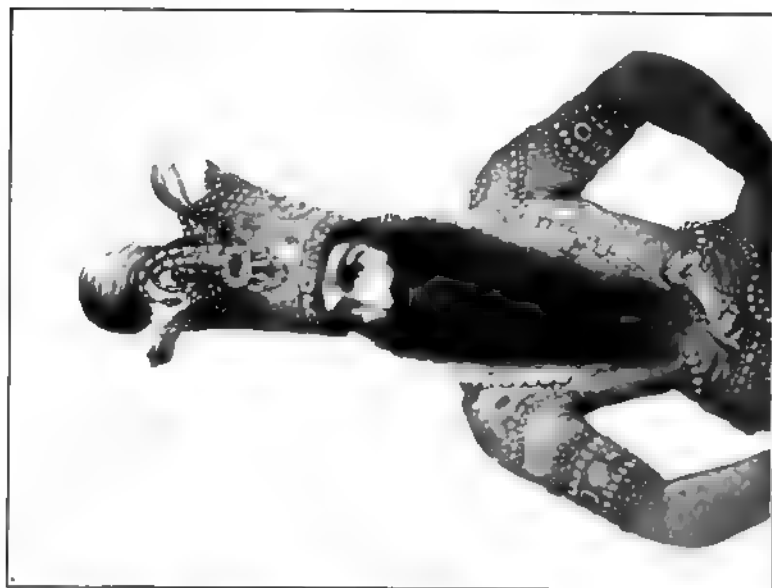
² Polybius, *History*, 10. 29. 1.

³ See Browne, *History of Tabaristān by Isfandiyār* (1216 A.D.), p. 189, London, 1908, and compare pp. 219, 243 of the same work.

⁴ In 856 A.D. (242 A.H.) according to Fraser, *Narrative*, p. 314, n. 1.

⁵ See Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 2. 445-450.

⁶ See Markham, *Narrative of the Embassy of Clavijo*, pp. 102-103, London, 1859 (Hakluyt Society).



FATH ALI SHAH
(Born at Damghan, 1760)



BRIDGE AT DAMGHAN



LOOKING FROM THE CITADEL TOWARD THE SHRINE OF IMAMZADAH JAFAR



INTERIOR OF THE CITADEL AT DAMGHAN

to heal, despite the gentler treatment by later monarchs, such as Shah Abbas the Great, who rehabilitated the city and its fortress, about 1600 A.D., so that Damghan flourished again.¹ Yet the very strength of the town and its central position seem to have made it ever a scene of conflict between hostile forces, as when, on October 2, 1729, the Persians under Nadir Shah gained a signal victory over the invading Afghans and forced them in the following year finally to withdraw from the country.²

The story of deeds of horror enacted at Damghan would be incomplete without the gruesome tale of the garden of prisoners of war planted head downwards by Zaki Khan, a cousin and half-brother of the head of the Zand dynasty, after he had quelled here, in 1763, a revolt by the Kajar tribe, who were destined later to furnish Persia with her ruling line. Tying each captive to the lopped-off bough of a tree, and sinking these in the ground at regular intervals, he allowed his victims slowly to suffocate in the earth while the leaves waved exultantly above their heels !³ No less inhuman was the torture inflicted by the Kajar founder, Agha Muhammad, upon Shah Rukh, the blind grandson of Nadir Shah, at Mashad in 1796. With royal barbarity he placed upon the hapless monarch's head a crown of paste, filled with boiling oil, so that the wretched ruler died from his sufferings some days later at Damghan, while his throne was seized by the perpetrator. Yet one thing more — and this a brighter one — the renowned Fath Ali Shah, who succeeded his bloody eunuch-uncle, was born at Damghan in 1769, and became the real founder of the Kajar dynasty that still reigns over Persia.⁴

I fear that this historic sketch may give an unduly dark and somber picture of Damghan — a side which others likewise have emphasized too much ; for, after all, Damghan has

¹ See Ferrier, p. 71 ; Curzon, 1. 288.

² See Eastwick, 2. 154 ; Curzon, 1. 288 ; and Horn, *Geschichte Irans in islamitischer Zeit*, in *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 589.

³ See Malcolm, *History of Persia*, 2. 76-77, and compare Eastwick, 2. 154 ; Curzon, 1. 288.

⁴ The date 1183 A.H. = 1769 A.D. is given in Nasir ad-Din's *Diary*, p. 79.

enjoyed abundant prosperity in its long lifetime, and is a place of commercial importance, as well as a city of noteworthy monuments. These latter we may now proceed to visit in order.

The first structure to attract the attention is the old citadel, Kalah or Burj, not far from our chosen hostelry. This ruined stronghold, with its heavy walls of earth, covers an area of some two hundred and fifty yards square, surrounded by the remains of a moat, in which are some stagnant pools of green water.¹ The entrance is on the southern side, and the vaulted arrangement of the portal looks old. Judging from the rather large bricks, I thought that the origin of the structure might possibly date back to Sasanian times. The crumbling circumvallation itself is formed of rubble, and consists of a double wall—an outer and an inner rampart, the former being particularly thick. Within the compound are still to be seen the remains of the original town, but in such a state of dilapidation that one can hardly conceive how its dwellers exist in their miserable hovels of clay. The ‘Governor’s Quarters’ were pointed out near the southeast corner of the enclosure, but we fancied that this localization might be open to question.²

An ascent to the top of the walls of the citadel affords an excellent view of the town, which spreads three quarters of the way around it. The space to the north is less occupied, and opens upon a green vista of gardens and trees, amidst which there lie clustered several groups of small houses, while back of them stretches the plain that merges gradually into the adjacent mountains. To the west of the stronghold, or really on the outside of the town, are the remains of two tombs and a mausoleum, to be described hereafter, together with a well-constructed caravansarai (called also a Ribat), which is com-

¹ My notebook records the area of the citadel as ‘240 yards square’; Eastwick (2. 152) gives ‘300 yards.’

² I have since found that Eastwick (2. 153) stated that ‘in the centre are the rooms formerly occupied by the

Governor, faced with burnt brick, with what has been a fountain in front.’ I may add that on neither visit did I notice the ‘curious traceries’ which Eastwick saw on the walls of the fort.

monly attributed to Shah Abbas, although it may date back a century earlier, to the time of the Safavid monarch Shah Ismail, who died in 1524.¹ To the east and south of the fastness spreads the city in its wider extent, marked by two towering minarets at widely separated points. The nearer one is more noticeable because its top has been partially preserved; the more distant tower has lost its top completely. Both of these structures are worthy of a more detailed description, and each will be presented in turn.

The minaret which lies nearest to the citadel, in an easterly direction, and whose top has been partially preserved, adjoins the chief mosque of the town, and is accordingly known as the *Minār-i Masjid-i Jāmi'*. It belongs to the eleventh century, and has the characteristic features of the earlier Seljuk architecture, although the mosque itself, called that of Imam Husain, dates from a later time.² This graceful minaret springs from a square surface, and towers aloft, with a tapering cylindrical shaft, for about a hundred feet.³ It is capped by the remains of a pinnacle turret, still recognizable by the vestiges of an octagonal column and a broken wooden platform on which the muazzin stood to raise his call to prayer. The lofty shaft is composed of eight drums, or sections, faced with unburnt bricks in artistic designs and separated from each other by

¹ The former statement, ascribing the work, as so often throughout Persia, to Shah Abbas, a prince of builders, was the one that was made to me; but Nasir ad-Din Shah (*Diary*, p. 77) speaks of the edifice as 'a beautiful caravansarai, said to be one of the buildings of Shah Ismail.' On the date of Shah Ismail see Horn, *Gesch. Irans in islam. Zeit*, in *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 579-581.

² For illustrations and details of these minarets see Sarre, *Denkmäler persischer Baukunst*, Lieferung 3, p. x (plate lxxxiii), Berlin, 1901, and the

same work, *Textband*, p. 112, 1910; cf. also Khanikoff, *Mémoire sur la partie méridionale de l'Asie centrale*, p. 75, Paris (1861), 1862. The date of the city mosque is given by Eastwick (2. 153) as 1119 A.H. = 1707 A.D.

³ The number of steps mounted in the interior is 105, according to the citation by Sarre (*op. cit.* p. 112) from the *Maṭla' ash-Shams*, tr. by Eugen Mittwoch under the title *Ort wo die Sonne aufgeht* (not accessible to me). The number '106 steps' is given by Eastwick, 2. 153.

narrow girdling bands that add to the effect. The variety of patterns is well conceived; a diamond-shaped ornamentation preponderates in the lower sections, a rectangular pattern prevailing in the higher drums. An especially tasteful decoration, halfway up, is formed by a circlet of raised arabesques in Kufic style, though too defaced to be deciphered; and the remains of a collar of greenish blue tiles, near the top, with a Koranic quotation, also in Kufic script, give a finish to the whole.

The other minaret, the one which rises at a considerable distance from the citadel, is known as the Minaret of the Mosque of Forty Columns (*Minār-i Masjid-i Chihal Sitūn*), though I heard it twice called that of the 'Lord's House' (*Tārī Khānah*). It differs from the other in having lost the whole of its top, as already noted, but agrees with that monument in the main features of size, structure, and design, as it belongs to the same period. The shaft consists of seven drums with bordering zones and a decoration of unburnt brick similar to that in the other minaret; the diamond pattern prevails in the four lower tiers, and the rectangular or square in the three upper divisions, although the brickwork has largely peeled off from the latter. At about one-third of the distance from the ground, a raised Kufic inscription encircles the column, but it is in a dilapidated condition. The mosque to which the minaret belonged has disappeared, but remains of it are probably to be recognized in the crumbling ruins around the base of the shaft, dating back possibly six centuries or more, and seemingly occupying the place of a much more ancient structure. This was the opinion of Eastwick more than a half century ago, when he saw among the half-buried débris some short but massive pillars of a temple or palace, which he believed might perhaps go back to the classic age of Hecatompylos.¹ It is undoubtedly to these sturdy pillars that the minaret owes its name of Chihal Sitūn, 'Forty Columns.' Near by is a madrasah, with rather pretty gardens for its students to enjoy.

¹ Eastwick, *Journal of a Diplomat's Residence*, 2.154.

Three other monuments at Damghan deserve mention ; they are shrines of saints, and two of them are interesting as specimens of Seljuk architecture in the eleventh century. The first of these is the Mausoleum of the Imam Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, who is more generally known as Pīr-i 'Alamdār, 'the aged one who sways the world,' and it is located in the easterly division of the city, not far from the chief mosque. In shape it resembles a huge circular tea canister, with a rounded top, and it is built of unburnt brick. The lower half of the exterior is without special design, although the bricks are set in a manner that gives a pleasing configuration ; the upper half is an elaborate piece of ornamental construction. Three narrow bands of lock-stitch design in mortar present a filigree effect and make the transfer from the simpler base to the more ornate sections above. Directly over these bands runs a broad border of interlaced geometrical patterns, surmounted by a rich belt of Kufic texts (unfortunately so marred as to be illegible), with a single chainwork-band on either edge to set off the whole. The topmost zone, directly below the domed roof, is made decorative by studlike brick headers let in between the circling rows of larger bricks. The curving dome rests like a cover upon a vessel, but looks broken and ragged because of its shattered rim, although a finish is given to the dome by a surmounting ornament with a double bulb. The entrance to the mausoleum is through the vaulted portal of a crumbling chamber ; and inscriptions, recorded by others, show that the edifice was erected in 1026 by a Caliph, whose name is obliterated, though that of the architect, Haji ibn al-Husain of Damghan, has been preserved.¹

The second mausoleum lies in a westerly direction just outside the city, and bears the romantic name of Chihal

¹ A full account of the mausoleum, together with illustrations (one of which has been reproduced here), will be found in Sarre, *Denkmäler persischer Baukunst*, Lieferung 4, p. 4, plate 84, Berlin, 1901, and the same work, *Textband*, pp. 113-114, Berlin, 1910.

Dukhtarān, 'Forty Daughters.' The precise origin of this appellation appears not to be known; but an alternate title, Chihal Sarān, 'Forty Heads,' seems to imply the story of a martyr band of virgins, 'forty' being the Eastern number for many.¹ In shape and style of architecture it resembles the mausoleum already described, though it is slightly less rotund in proportions, and it is surmounted by a rather pointed roof, which somewhat resembles a pineapple cheese. The decorative borders are characterized by a design in which an X-figure predominates; and, as in the other cases, the girdling band of embossed Kufic characters is difficult to decipher. The portal to the right is walled up, and another dome, likewise pointed, adjoins. The date of the mausoleum is the middle of the eleventh century.²

A little to the east, but close by, stands the third mausoleum, — a particularly sacred shrine, — the tomb of the Imamzadah Jafar, a descendant, in the sixth generation, from Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, Ali. This square edifice, capped by a vaulted cupola, contains the remains of the saint together with a sarcophagus of a much later date (1362). For details regarding the interior of this forbidden sanctum, we must refer any one who may be interested to a description by the Moslem writer quoted in Sarre's standard work on Muhammadan architecture in Persia.³

Interesting though these sepulchral monuments may be architecturally and historically, they are not the only characteristics that Damghan has to boast. There is a stir and movement in

¹ Compare the remarks by Fraser, *Narrative*, p. 314, with Vámbéry, *Life and Adventures*, pp. 302–303, London, 1884.

² For a fuller description see Sarre, *Denkmäler*, Lieferung 4, p. 4, plate lxxxiv (here reproduced), and the same work, *Textband*, p. 114; also p. 115 for a cut of the portal and for comments on the inscriptions at the

entrance, in which Sarre maintains that Khanikoff was more correct in reading the date as 446 A.H. = 1054 A.D. than was the author of the *Maṭla' ash-Shams* (*op. cit.* 3. 278) in considering the figures to be '300' A.H. = 912 A.D.

³ The authoritative description, which is quoted at length by Sarre, *Denkmäler*, *Textband*, pp. 115–116, is by the author of the *Maṭla' ash-Shams*.

the old city that answers, after all, to the throb of life in her streets or in the covered bazars, through which one wanders, to stop now at a sweetmeat-seller's booth, then to hurry past the rattle of the brassbeaters and the noisy ironworkers, and again to glance at the cloth-dealers, asquat by their goods, while the purchasers crowd their way among donkeys, horses, and camels. All this recalled to my mind a memorandum about Damghan made by the Oriental geographer, Yakubi, over a millennium ago (891 A.D.). He wrote : —

‘Damghan is the chief city of Khorasan, and was conquered by Abdallah, son of Amir and grandson of Kuraiz, during the califate of Othman, son of Affan, in the year thirty of the Hijra (650 A.D.). Its people are of the Ajami Persian stock, and are most skilful in making garments of wool and of the fine cloth of Kumis. The revenue of the town amounts to 1,000,500 dirhams, and is included under the revenue taxation of Khorasan.’¹

A century later another Arab writer, Mukaddasi (985 A.D.), described the town, though in less complimentary terms, as follows : —

‘Damghan is a small city, with a gravelly waste around it. The baths are poor, and the market-places are not good, nor can it boast of many men of importance; but it has a good climate. In the most populated section there is a small place upon which stands a citadel with three gates, namely, the Bab ar-Rai, the Bab Khurasan, and the Bab . . . [the name is omitted in the text]. It has two market-places, an upper and a lower. Above the Ribat, or fortified place, of Apavah, Dahistan, and Ibna as-Sabil, there is a small turbid pool whose measure, neither rises nor falls. On the main street (of Damghan) there is a mosque with water-tanks like those at Marv and Semnan, and on the street of the market-place there is a fine mosque. The water fills the tanks of these alternately, so that the tanks are emptied and filled in turn.’²

Much more favorable were the comments of Mis‘ar Muhallil a few years earlier (941 A.D.) : —

‘Damghan is a large city, and abounds in fruits. The wind blows there day and night. There is a wonderful construction, due to Kisra (King

¹ See Yakubi, ed. De Goeje, *Bibl. Geog. Arab.* 7. 296. 355–356. The passage (translated for me by Dr. Yohannan) is obscure in

² See Mukaddasi, ed. De Goeje, 3. one or two details.

Chosroes), for the distribution of water, which springs from a cavern in the mountains and is divided through one hundred and twenty canals to the hundred and twenty districts, so that none receives a larger share than the other, and it is impossible to appropriate it for anything else than this purpose. It is truly remarkable, and I have not seen its like or anything more beautiful in other countries. In the vicinity is a village called the Village of Porters, where there is a fountain from which springs blood. There is no doubt about this, for it possesses all the properties of blood. When mercury is thrown into it, it turns to a hard, dry stone. This village is known also by the name of Ghanjan. In Damghan there is an excellent variety of red apples, called *Kūmīst*, from Kumis, which are exported to Irak; in the vicinity there are mines of alum and salt, but no sulfur, though there are veins of pure gold.¹

The remarkable source of water here alluded to is none other than the famous Chashmah-i Ali, or fountain which was said to have sprung from a hoof-print of Ali's horse, in the mountains nearby. The stream that flows hence to Damghan, and the constructed watercourses in the vicinity, are sufficient to bear out the truth of the Arab writer's statement, so far as the water is concerned.² Yet Yakut, who passed through Damghan in the year 1216, says that he failed to notice the various details mentioned by his brother writer, whom he quotes, although he rightly emphasizes the fact that he himself made no stay in the city. He adds, however, another interesting fact, that in the mountains could be seen 'the fortress of Gird-Kuh, which belonged to the Ismaelites,' or the accursed band of the Assassins. This fortress is evidently the stronghold in the vicinity of Damghan which is referred to by Marco Polo (1272) in his chapters on 'the Old Man of the Mountain' and the 'castle' of his hashish-frenzied followers.³

¹ Abu Mis'ar ibn al-Muhalhil (about 941 A.D.), quoted by Yakut (2. 539); see Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 223, and Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, 2. 45.

² The stream flowing to Damghan, now called the Chashmah-i Ali River, appears to be that mentioned in the

Pahlavi Bundahishn, 20. 18: 'The river Akhōshīr is in Kūmīsh' (i.e. the region about Damghan; see West, *SBE.* 5. 79, and Justi, *Beiträge zur alten Geographie Persiens*, 2. 6).

³ See Marco Polo, ed. Yule, 1. 143-155. The fortress is called Diz Gumbadan, 'The Domed Fort,' by Mus-



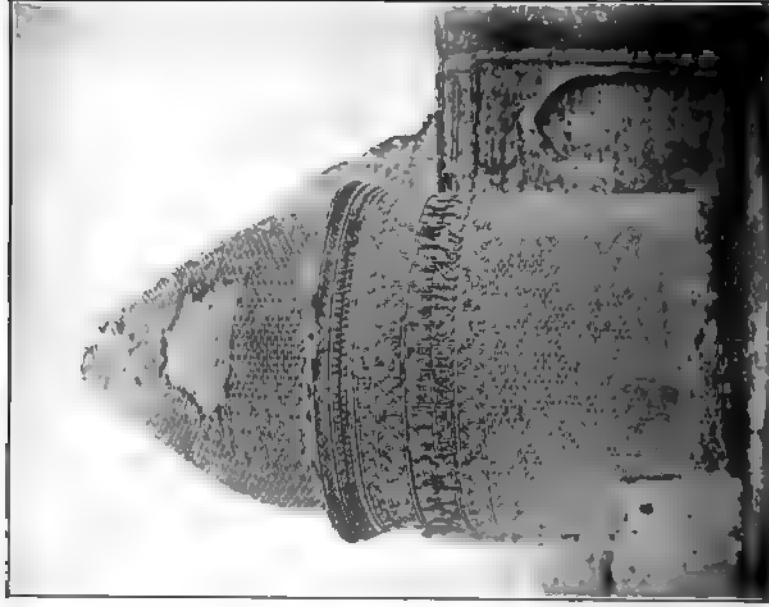
MINARET OF THE CHIFLI MOSQUE OF DAUGHAN



MINARET OF THE MOSQUE OF FORTY COLUMNS



From Sarre, Denksidler
MAUSOLEUM OF FIR-I ALANDAE AT DAMGHAN



From Sarre, Denksidler
MAUSOLEUM OF THE FORTY DAUGHTERS AT DAMGHAN

This special fountain of Chashmah-i Ali lies about sixteen miles northwest of Damghan, and has been described by several travelers.¹ The account by Eastwick, who visited it in 1862, is worth quoting.

‘The spring is in the center of a valley surrounded by mountains, which, by their arid look, enhance the beauty of the grove and rich verdure in which the fountain is embosomed. The water gushes copiously from a rock, and is as clear, to use my servant’s poetical expression, as the water of the eye. It flows into an oblong tank, about six hundred feet long by eighty feet broad, shaded on all sides by fine *chenārs*, poplars, and other trees, planted probably in Agha Muhammad Shah’s time [before 1797]. Bridging the middle of the tank is a pavilion, built by the present Shah [Nasir ad-Din Shah], while one erected by his grandfather stands at the eastern extremity of the water. Close by the spring is the Ziyarat Gah, or place of pilgrimage, with a stone marked by the fossil of some animal, which, the Muhammadans say, is an indentation made by the hoof of Ali’s horse.’²

This site is the more interesting historically because Alexander is presumed to have passed it on his march from Hecatompylos to Hyrcania, for his historians, Curtius and Diodorus, locate his encampment at a place of similar description, ‘one hundred and fifty stadia’ (about seventeen miles) from the great city.³

taufi, according to Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, p. 365, and *Persia under the Mongols*, in *JRAS.* 1902, p. 745; it is mentioned likewise by Firdausi, tr. Mohl (folio ed.), 7.463, ll. 415–416. Isfandiār of Tabaristan, *History*, tr. Browne, p. 240, also refers to the fact that Damghan was one of the cities in which the propaganda of the Assassins was welcomed. For the history and tenets of the sect reference may be made to Margoliouth’s article on them in Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, 2. 138–141, Edinburgh, 1909.

¹ See, for example, Morier, *A Second Journey*, 2. 369–370; Melgunoff, *Das südliche Ufer des kaspischen*

Meeres, p. 127; Napier, *Tour in Khorassan*, in *JRGS.* 46. 69–70; Nasir ad-Din Shah, *Diary*, p. 71.

² Eastwick, *Journal*, 2. 159.

³ Quintus Curtius, *Hist. Alex.* 6. 4. 3–7, writes as follows: ‘Having marched a hundred and fifty stadia [about 16½ miles], he encamped in a valley leading into Hyrcania. There is a leafy grove of very high, shady trees, and the soil of the valley is rich because of the streams of water that flow from the overhanging rocks. From the very roots of the mountains gushes the river Ziobetis [miswritten for Ziboetis], which flows as a single stream for about three stadia [¼ of a mile], when, beaten back by a rock

Another spring in the same vicinity, the Chashmah-i Bād, or 'Fountain of the Wind,' is not without a characteristic legend. A popular belief holds that if anything foul is thrown into its water, a mighty cloud will arise and a severe storm ensue. The folk have plenty of tales to tell in support of their belief, and for this reason they try to keep the fountain unpolluted.¹

which obstructs the channel, it opens two courses with divided waters. After this its torrent, made more violent by the ruggedness of the rocks over which it runs, falls headlong into the earth. For three hundred stadia [about 83 miles] it flows subterraneously, but again emerges as if from a separate source and occupies a new channel, broader than the former, and spreads to a width of thirteen (!) stadia, and once again, crowded between narrower banks, pursues its course. Finally it falls into another river, called the Ridagnus. The natives affirm that whoever is cast into the cavern, which is near the source, reappears again where the other mouth of the river opens. Alexander caused two persons to be plunged into the place where the waters enter the earth, and those who were sent to watch saw their bodies discharged where the river broke forth again.'

Diodorus Siculus, *History*, 17. 75, gives a somewhat similar description: 'Alexander went a distance of a hundred and fifty stadia [about 16½ miles] and encamped near a high rock. At its base there was a cave where a divinity might dwell, from which issued a large river, called Stiboetes. This flows in an impetuous course for three stadia [½ mile], and then is cleft in two by a breast-shaped rock, beneath which is a huge chasm. The river dashes down into this with a great roar and foam from its encoun-

ter with the rock. It runs underground for three hundred stadia [83 miles], and then comes forth again into the open air.'

The phenomenon so graphically, if possibly exaggeratedly, described by these two classic writers appears to be associated in some way with a tunnel that is mentioned by an Arab writer as being near Tāk, in the vicinity of Damghan; this will be brought out later in the chapter on Tak. See also Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 52-55, in which pages the route of Alexander in this neighborhood is fully discussed; cf. p. 186, below.

¹ See Eastwick, *Journal*, 2. 161, and Melgunoff, *Das südliche Ufer des kaspischen Meeres*, p. 144. Numerous details about this spring are found in other writers. For some added references I have to thank my friends Dr. Louis H. Gray and Dr. George L. Hamilton. From Kazwini there is an account quoted in the anonymous *Tuhfat al-gharā'ib*, foll. 302 b-332, see British Museum Add. 37. 261 (Rieu's Cat. 871), see also Vullers, *Lexicon Persicum*, s.v. *bād-khāni*, p. 161; Clavijs (Jan. 12, 1406), *Narrative*, tr. Markham, p. 182 (Hakluyt Society); Abū 'l-Fazl, in connection with the exile of Humayun at Shah Tahmasp's court in 1544 (cf. Price, *Chronological Retrospect of Mohammedan History*, 3. 840-841); and Frazer (1821), *Narrative*, p. 312-313. Similar stories are told about a well at Ghaznah, Afghan-

This superstition is certainly a thousand years old, as shown by a quotation given from a still earlier writer by the Arab geographer, Ibn Fakiḥ of Hamadan, in 908 A.D.¹

Legend and superstition fill the air around Damghan. Even the wind that here blows ceaselessly has been talked about by the Orientals who have visited the town for a thousand years past. One of them has already been cited.² Nor shall I forget the first night we spent in the place. In the late watches—restless, perhaps, because I could not rid my memory of the graveyard beneath our window, where I had seen a wooden box waiting to convey its earthly tenant to that final resting-place of all—I was startled by a strange sigh. It grew into a moan; then into a deep sepulchral wail. It was the wind—the wind told about by Mis'ar Muḥalhil and the rest—and to my dreamy senses it seemed a requiem chant intoned in memory of the dead Darius, yet changing, as it rose, into a paean of victory for Alexander's triumph over ancient Iran.

istan, in the time of Sabuktāgin about 950 A.D., see Elliot, *History of India*, 2. 20, 437.

¹ See Ibn Fakiḥ, ed. De Goeje, *Bibl. Geog. Arab.* 5. 310; and, for a translation of the passage, compare Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, 2. 55.

² See the quotation above, p. 171, from Mis'ar Muḥalhil, and compare the memorandum about others in Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, p. 365. The wind is mentioned by Claviḡo (1406), *Narrative*, tr. Markham, p. 182 (Hakluyt Society).

CHAPTER XIII

EXCURSIONS FROM DAMGHAN TO FRAT AND TAK

‘And Hecatompylos, her hunderd gates.’

—MILTON, *Paradise Regained*, 3. 287.

A STUDY of phases of native life among the villages in the environs, and the pleasure of wandering over sites of a historic past, lent additional interest to my stay at Damghan. One day was devoted to an examination of what must have been the ground occupied by the famous city of Hecatompylos; and another was given to a visit in the locality of ancient Tagae, now represented by Tak. Both of these excursions—the former to the south, the latter northward—were made on horseback, with all the enjoyment which that exercise insures.

The start on the first outing was made at five o'clock in the morning, and the series of swift gallops over a stretch of clayey soil at dawn was a delight; but when the horses trod fetlock-deep through drifting sand under a broiling sun at mid-day, it required some of the enthusiasm of the student to be able to forget the discomfort involved.

My goal this day was the townlet of Frāt, or Farāt, about twenty-five miles south of the city, for the historic Hecatompylos is probably to be located between it and Damghan. The full discussion of this problem I shall reserve for consideration elsewhere;¹ but it is appropriate here to state in advance my opinion that Hecatompylos was only a classic appellation for the chief city of the district of Komisene, or Comisene, which is still perpetuated in the name of Shahr-i Kumis, ‘City of

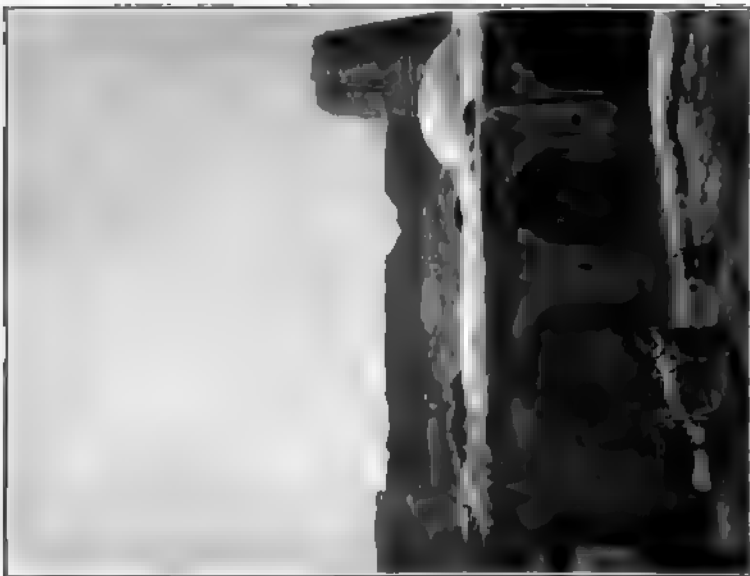
¹ The discussion will appear in a monograph to be called *Caspiae Portae, or the Caspian Gates of Antiquity*.



THE APPROACH TO FRAT



WALLS OF FRAT NEAR DAMOCHAN



THE SMALL TAKIAN SQUARE AT FRAT



THE SANDY PLAIN BETWEEN FRAT AND DARGHAN

Kumis,' given to the sand-buried ruins which are also called Komüşh, Kūmās, or Gūmās by the natives.¹ This inference may have been gathered already from what was said in the preceding chapter on the history of Damghan; but it is emphasized here because it forms the special link that connects the portions of the present chapter.²

¹ That the district Komisene should be named after its principal city is quite natural; such instances abound in Persia as elsewhere. The classic designation *Hecatompylos*, 'of hundred gates,' is possibly a Greek version of some such title for Kumis as *Şad-darvāzah*, 'hundred portals,' since the Orientals are fond of calling their cities by some honorific appellation, instead of using the actual name. So Mordtmann, *Hecatompylos, ein Beitrag zur vergleichenden Geographie Persiens*, in *Sitzb. kgl. bayer. Akad. Wiss. zu München* 1 (1869), p. 497, 536. More still will be found on this subject in my monograph on the Caspian Gates. I may also note that additional weight is given to the view expressed above regarding the likelihood of the identity of the site of Hecatompylos and that of the old town of Kumis by the kindred view of Houtum-Schindler, in *JRAS.* 1876, p. 427, and of the same authority in *Zt. Gesellschaft für Erdkunde*, 12. 216, Berlin, 1887. A similar opinion was held also by Rawlinson, according to a note in Ferrier, *Caravan Journeys in Persia*, p. 69, n. 1, London, 1856. I may furthermore add that I fear there is not sufficient evidence to support the view which has recently been put forward by my friend Major P. M. Sykes (in *The Geographical Journal*, 37. 17-18, London, 1911), who suggests that Hecatompylos may have been situated at Paras, more than fifty miles northeast

of Astrabad, whereas the classical sources state that Alexander passed Hecatompylos *before* reaching Zadracarta (Astrabad).

² I repeat that this view (p. 162, n. 1) which draws a distinction between Kumis proper, or Shahr-i Kumis, 'City of Kumis,' and Damghan, and considers one of the two adjacent places to have been supplanted by the other, as in the case of Rai-Teheran, Shahrud-Bustam, and the like, is simply my own opinion based upon observations on the spot. In corroboration of this view, among other evidences, may be cited the version of Tabari by Bel'ami (963 A.D.), tr. Zotenberg, 3. 491, who mentions a routed army as 'rallied at Kumis and at Damghan' and afterwards (3. 492) speaks in general of the 'territory of Kumis.' This would require a slight modification of the view held by such an authority as Le Strange (*Eastern Caliphate*, pp. 364-365), who wrote as follows: 'The capital town of the province [of Kūmis] is Dāmghān, which the Arabs wrote Ad-Dāmghān, and which in accordance with their usage is often referred to as Kūmis (sc. Madīnah Kūmis, "the City of Kūmis"), the capital thus taking to itself the name of the province.'

I add here the chief references to Kumis and Damghan in the Arab and Persian geographers, the former name preponderating in the earlier itineraries (cf. Le Strange, p. 368). The

Galloping first in a southeasterly direction from Damghan, and afterwards in a southerly and southwesterly course, I found

main allusions in the route-books (cf. De Goeje, *Bibl. Geog. Arab.*) are these: —

Ibn Khurdadhbah (864 A.D.), 6. 23, 'to Semnan, 8 farsakhs; to Akhurin, 9 farsakhs; to Kumis, 8 farsakhs; [total distance] from Rai to it [*i.e.* Kumis], 63 farsakhs.'

Kudamah (880 A.D.), 6. 201 = transl. p. 155, 'Semnan, 4 farsakhs; Akhurin, 9 farsakhs; Karyat Dayah (*i.e.* Dah Mullah), 4 farsakhs; Kumis, 4 farsakhs; al-Haddadah, 7 farsakhs.'

Yakubi (891 A.D.), 7. 278, 'from Kumis along the main highway to the city of Nishapur are 9 stations.'

Ibn Rustah (903 A.D.), 7. 169-170, 'from Semnan to Akhurin, 9 farsakhs, the road being first through a level desert, then a valley, traversing which for about four farsakhs the fortified station of Ab Ahuan is passed before reaching the village of Akhurin. [See also Tomaschek, *Topog. Pers.* 1. 222-223.] From Akhurin to the Village of Dayah, 5 farsakhs, the road being through level ground until reaching Dah Dayah (*i.e.* Dah Mullah), where there is a halting-place. From Dah Dayah to Damghan, which is the chief city (*madīnah*) of Kumis, 4 farsakhs, the road being through level ground until reaching Kumis, and the chief traffic is in white goods for headgear and wrappers. From Kumis to Haddadah, 7 farsakhs, the road being through cultivated lands of it (*sic*), passing a fortified station (*ribāt*) and ruins, which are said to be dwellings that were destroyed by an earthquake, then passing between villages, on the right and the left, before reaching Haddadah. From Haddadah to Badash, 7 farsakhs,

the road being through level land on the right and left, with villages, one after another, before reaching Badash, around which are fields and gardens.'

Ibn Fakih al-Hamadani (903 A.D.), 5. 318, 'from Rai to Damghan, 80 farsakhs; from Damghan to Nishapur, 80; total from Rai to Nishapur, 160 farsakhs.' The other allusions to Kumis in Ibn Fakih are rather to the district than the city, *e.g.* 5. 209 (mere mention of Kumis); 5. 305, 'lands (*balād*) of Kumis'; 5. 309, Rai and Kumis; 5. 310 (ditto).

Masudi (943 A.D.), 8. 49, 'between the districts of Kumis and Nishapur there is a large and long mountain . . . [called Mount Murjan, 'Charity Mount,' and another mountain which 'formerly belonged to Khurasan'] because Kumis was the only district between Rai and Khurasan, and its cities are Bistam, Semnan, and Damghan.' Cf. also Masudi, *Livre de l'Avertissement*, tr. Carra de Vaux, p. 74.

Istakhri (951 A.D.), 1. 229, alludes to Rai, Khvar, Semnan, and 'Damghan of Kumis.' Again (1. 282) Istakhri records: 'the stages in Khurasan are: from Nishapur to the end of its limits, where Kumis is, [one has to journey] as far as the Village of the Kurds, 7 days [*sic*]; from the Village of the Kurds as far as Damghan, 5 stations (*manzil*).' Furthermore he writes, 1. 206: 'in Kumis (district) are located Semnan, and Damghan, and Bistam.' Still further, 1. 210, 'the largest city of Kumis is Damghan; it is larger than Khvar of Rai; Semnan is smaller than it; Bistam is smaller than Semnan. Damghan is scant in water; and its buildings are mediocre. Bistam is better off in

the entire tract to be sandy in its character, although yielding readily to cultivation through irrigation, as was proved by the abundance of villages and hamlets springing up by the very side of the sand-buried towns that once made up Shahr-i Kumis. Settlements like those of Jafarabad, Zayinabad, and a score of others, with their trees, formed a delightful contrast to the successive rows of barren sand-heaps gathered about the mouths of abandoned *kanāts*, or underground water-channels, that once irrigated the tract. These subterranean canals are burrowed in mole-like fashion for long distances in various directions, and they are the same well-shafts as those described in this region by Polybius, ages ago, as quoted above.¹

Shahr-i Kumis, or the city of classic Komisene, appears to have consisted of a congeries of small towns and villages—most of them now sand-obliterated—spread over a fairly considerable area. The first real traces of this vanished metropolis

buildings and has more fruit; much fruit is carried from Bistam to Irak. Kumis manufactures celebrated cloth-stuffs, and they are exported.' In another passage, l. 215–216, Istakhri gives the list of stations for each day along the Khurasan route as follows: 'The road from Rai to Khurasan via Kumis is this:—from Rai to Afridun [called *Afrandān* in text], 1 station (*manzil*); from Afridun to Kuhandah, 1 station; from Kuhandah to Khvar, 1; from Khvar to Karyat al-Milh ('Salt Village'), 1; from Karyat al-Milh to Ras al-Kalb, 1; from Ras al-Kalb to Semnan, 1; from Semnan to Aliabadh, 1; from Aliabadh to Jarmjuy, 1; from Jarmjuy to Damghan, 1; from Damghan to Haddadah, 1; from Haddadah to Badash, 1; to Murjan-i Habirah ('Great Murjan'), 1; to Haftdar, 1; to Asadabad, 1.' In l. 253 is a mere mention of Kumis as belonging to the province of Jibal; also at l. 284 is a mere mention.

Ibn Haukal (978 A.D.), 2. 206, mentioning the district, says: 'in Kumis are Semnan, Damghan, and Bistam.'

Mukaddasi (985 A.D.), 3. 355, describes Damghan in a passage that is translated above, p. 171.

Idrisi (1154 A.D.), cf. translation by Jaubert, *Géographie d'Édrisi*, p. 179, Paris, 1840, 'belonging to Kumis are Semnan, Damghan, and Bistam.'

Yakut (1225 A.D.), cf. translation by Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 464, 'Kumis is the Arabic form of the Persian name Kumish. The chief place is the celebrated city of Damghan, between Rai and Nishapur. Other noteworthy towns are Bistam and Biar. Some writers include also Semnan, but the majority place that city under the province of Rai.'

¹ See p. 159, above. For a map of this entire district see Houtum-Schindler, in *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde*, 12, table V, Berlin, 1877, and compare Holdich, *Map of Persia*.

that I noticed were passed some distance south of Damghan, shortly before reaching the populous village of Khurzan. The natives count these remains as having formed a part of the old city of Kumis, though all that is now visible is a mass of crumbling clay walls, sometimes covered several feet deep with dust, or with drifts of sand piled yards high against them. I could find no signs of an actual citadel nor of any kind of stone structure, the whole having been built of clay or sun-dried bricks; but a few tenanted huts in the interior showed that it was still possible to maintain life, even amidst this nonpareil of desolation.

Such was the first of a number of dust-shrouded ruins, the oldest of which was said to be Alian, a short distance to the southwest of Frat. All of these settlements combined to make up Shahr-i Kumis, the natives asserted; and they stated that large bricks, evidently of Gabr size, synonymous with age, were often dug up in the vicinity and applied for building purposes at Frat.¹ The presence of such bricks, together with other remains that have been unearthed, as well as traces of sunken aqueducts, have similarly been instanced by Houtum-Schindler as furnishing data to be used in support of the view that the site of ancient Hecatompylos was identical with the old town of Kumis.² Yet Shahr-i Kumis today is nothing but a field of dust-mounds, a grave of the dead past—dead as the graves by which I stood while taking photographs of the sand-covered site. Some day the spade of the archaeologist may have busy work to do in unearthing chapters of history that may well be hidden here.

The desolation of Shahr-i Kumis had been wrought, the villagers said, when a river that had previously flowed from the mountains on the north, past Amravan, was diverted from its course long ago. The story is that Shah Abbas the Great

¹ On 'Gabr' bricks see my *Persia Past and Present*, p. 435.

² See Houtum-Schindler, *Notes on Some Antiquities found near Dam-*

ghan, in *JRAS.* 1876, p. 427, and cf. the same author's *Routen in Chorasān*, in *Zt. Gesellsch. f. Erdkunde*, 12. 216-217.

had turned its source so that the stream flowed northward into Mazandaran, instead of southward into the district of Kumis, although it seems likely (from what has been noted above) that the decadence of Kumis had begun long before.¹ Traces of the dried-up river-bed I saw near Kasimabad when riding towards Frat, and the parched and sterile land in every direction told a pathetic tale of a source of life cut off. Thus cities perish in the East, leaving hardly a vestige to indicate their site. Merv, once queen of Transcaspia, the ancient Margiana, might be cited with a hundred others that have shared the fate of Hecatompylos, the erstwhile capital of Parthia.

Frat itself, which formerly enjoyed the advantages of the populous neighborhood, is now hardly more than a village. Disease has joined hands with drought in bringing about its ruin, for cholera has decimated the place, proving even more fatal to its male population than to the women. There were not above twenty or twenty-five houses in all, or scarcely a hundred souls, to make up the quota of inhabitants in this town, which local pride claims to date back to Kayanian times, the era before the great Achaemenian kings. The dwellings of baked yellowish clay looked sickly to me beneath the scorching noonday sun, as did the families that lived in them. But they were kindly disposed and hospitable, giving freely of their limited bounty, in the form of eggs, tea, and bread; and they made Safar happy by an extra liberal dish of his favorite *dugh*, a sort of curds and whey. Even my horse found some special exhilaration in the provender he received, for his antics were unusually spirited after his mid-day meal.

We set out in the afternoon upon our homeward way, but there was a sinister smile in the look of some camels we passed on the plain, foreboding evil. They were giving warning that,

¹ The name of Shah Abbas is mentioned in this connection by Houtum-Schindler, in *Zt. Ges. f. Erdkunde*, 12. 216, and this agrees with the statement of 'about three hundred years

ago,' which I heard at Damghan. The stream was, therefore, a different one (so also Houtum-Schindler) from the Chashmah-i Ali River.

before an hour should elapse, a terrific sand-storm, which almost obliterated the trail, would be blowing like a blast in our teeth. Shower after shower of stinging dust filled the air and sifted down in clogging masses upon forgotten Shahr-i Kumis, and I could understand how, when once the ruin had begun, the city could gradually sink into oblivion.

By evening we reached Damghan again and found a hearty welcome awaiting us from the Prince Governor after our long day's ride of nine hours over an area of more than fifty miles that formed a historic part of his large domain.

That night I could not sleep, for my mind was too full of Alexander and of the closing stage of his forced marches in pursuit of Darius. The very part of the route ahead of us to the east on the way to Shahrud was 'the road which was desert because of lack of water,' as Alexander's historian Arrian told (3. 21. 7). That was the tract traversed at breakneck speed, to end in an overwhelming victory at dawn over the straggling remains of the retreating Persian host. The futile resistance that was attempted, the wild panic that ensued, and the closing scene of the tragedy — Darius slain by the traitorous weapons of his own generals, and deserted of all, save his faithful dog — were pictures that were as vivid in my mind as if enacted the day before.¹ The body of the dead king was accorded royal honors by the victor and was sent to Persepolis. Alexander turned back to Hecatompylos to unite his forces and to give his soldiers some days' rest, at the same time celebrating his triumph, before proceeding to take vengeance upon the regicides, Bessus and Nabarzanes. The former arch-conspirator had fled eastward towards Bactria; the latter, northward into Hyrcania. Alexander chose to follow Nabarzanes at once, leaving the fate of Bessus to be decided later, and accordingly he struck northward from Hecatompylos into Tabaristan and Hyrcania. On

¹ The incident of the dog that alone remained faithful to Darius even in death is told by Aelian, *De Natura Animalium*, 6. 25 (ed. Hercher, Leipzig, 1864). For references to Darius's death see p. 117, n. 5.

the first stage his route is believed to have led him past Tagae,¹ in other words, from the vicinity of Damghan through the modern village of Tak to the neighborhood of Chashmah-i Ali, as noted above (p. 173); and this was approximately the line of march taken by Antiochus the Great when making a similar campaign a century later.² For me the site of Tagae had, therefore, a special attraction.

Accordingly the third morning was planned for a visit to Tak (Pers. *Tāk*, pronounced *Tawk*) and its environs, and I was in the saddle, ready to start, before six o'clock.

Tak lies about six miles slightly northeast of Damghan, on the road to Shahrud, and not far from the mountains.³ From Hecatompylos it would have been a natural halting-place for the first stage of a march in the hot weather of July, when Alexander made it in 330 B.C.⁴ Be that as it may, the classic Tagae and the modern Tak are commonly accepted as having occupied the same position. The present road to Tak is the more northerly of two forks that lead in an easterly direction from Damghan; the other, or southerly, road passes by Bāk; and both converge about ten miles beyond, and lead to Shahrud. It was along the Shahrud road that Alexander appears to have sent his third column, with the baggage train, as being the easier way to Zadracarta (the modern Astrabad), near the

¹ For references to *Táyai* see Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, 2. 44, n. 2. The identity of Tagae and *Tāk* is generally accepted without question, as by such authorities as Tomaschek and Houtum-Schindler.

² See Polybius, *History*, 10. 28. 7; 10. 29. 1.

³ The distance '1½ farsakhs' was given to me several times as the interval between *Tāk* and Damghan, but I estimated it as nearer two farsakhs, or at least seven miles. Forster (in 1784) recorded it as 'about eight miles,' see Forster, in Pinkerton's

Voyages, 9. 311 and cf. Forster, *Voyage du Bengale*, tr. Langlès, 2. 263. Yet Houtum-Schindler, *Zt. Ges. f. Erdkunde*, 12. 217, gives '5 miles.'

⁴ The very slight detour involved in this route to the locality of Chashmah-i Ali would be accounted for (if not otherwise) by the fact that Alexander's baggage-train must have followed the road by Tagae on its way to Zadracarta via the site of the present Shahrud. As regards the shortness of the first stage, I may note that in Persia it is found practical to make the first stage of a march rather light, nor

Caspian Sea, where he reunited his three divisions.¹ The second column, under Craterus, possibly still in the rear, is presumed to have been directed northward from Semnan into the Sawad Kuh, turning then eastward, to punish the Greek mercenaries who had served under Darius, but who had now escaped into Tapuria (Tabaristan). The third division, his own, consisting of the lightest and best of his army, was led by the shortest, but most difficult route, across the mountains into Hyrcania, in order to overtake Nabarzanes, who surrendered later.²

I could note each of these probable directions as we rode out on to the plain toward the hills. Our horses were good and the pace was lively, but what won my admiration was the speed of the small white donkey upon which our guide was seated. With pattering footsteps the little beast cantered along at a tempo that matched the gallop of our own mounts. Once he stumbled and fell; but, quick as his rider, he was on his feet again and leading the van in an instant.

The watercourses streaming in every direction showed how abundant was the precious supply from the mountains; and the laughing fields yielded in return rich sheaves of wheat to the garnerer's sickle. I could not help thinking of Pindar's famous ode beginning *ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ* — 'water is the best thing.'³ Whatever may be the philosophic or metaphysical interpretation placed by the commentators upon the first line of this lyric, no Persian would quibble for an instant about the exegesis.

In less than an hour we had reached the large and flourishing

should we forget the possibility that the festivities at Hecatompyles (cf. Diodorus Siculus, 17. 75) may perhaps have played a part in making a shortened stage acceptable.

¹ The name Astrabad is generally thought to be a direct descendant of Zadracarta — *Z^adr^a* (= [*A*]stra) + *karta* (= bad); so Mordtmann, *op. cit.* p. 536.

² The general data on this point are to be gathered from Arrian, 3, ch. 23-24; Curtius, 6. 4. 2; 5. 23; Diodorus, 17. 75-76. For details regarding the probable passes followed by the three columns, see the scholarly discussion by Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, 2. 45-63, and compare Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders*, pp. 258-270.

³ Pindar, *Olymp.* 1. 1.

village of Gāz, dominated by the fortress around which it is built. The locality round about was notably well supplied with water and trees, even though the water in the moat was green with a malarious scum. But the place was healthy, and comprised about two hundred houses with four or five members to a family. Best of all—in Persia an almost infallible sign of relative welfare—the walls were more carefully kept up than elsewhere in this region. ‘This is a good place,’ said Safar with a knowing look, and that opinion was later shared by an old shepherd at Tak, who praised Gāz far above his own home.

The fields beyond, as we cantered along, looked under good cultivation. Now and then I reined up for a moment to ask the peasants for some information, and always received a civil response, while one of the best-informed of the laborers—his red shirt flashed almost as glaringly as his sickle—told me much about the routes. Practically all the traffic from Damghan to Astrabad—or from the territory of Hecatómpylos to Zadracarta—goes by way of Shahrud, the route which Alexander’s baggage column must have followed. If Alexander himself pursued the difficult Chashmah-i Ali route, as we may well believe—with his column of picked men, as noted above—he must have made a very slight detour to pass through Tak, judging from the modern trails, for the natives insisted that the route from Damghan to Astrabad, in that direction, lay a trifle to the west of Tak, but was little used because of its difficulty. All this would match precisely the classic statements alluded to above.

My careful reconnoitering and note-taking seemed eventually to arouse the suspicions of my trusty communicator. No doubt imagining that I might be a spy, he came back from the mill towards which he was going and asked Safar if I was a Russian. Happily Safar was able to reassure him that I was an American from the New World, or Yankī Dūnyā, with no sinister intention regarding his country, and anxious only to collect data with

reference to its historic past.¹ So we galloped forward, leaving behind the noise of the mill busy with the wheat brought by our harvesting friends, and passing lines of pistachio trees, fragrant in odor and mellifluous with the music of the nightingale, till we reached the fields spreading around Tak.

Tak today is but a large walled village of mud, spread over a considerable area. The *burj*, or citadel, is about eight hundred yards long by four hundred yards wide, with fairly high walls, but the bricks of which it is partly constructed did not strike me as large enough to denote any extreme antiquity. Probably it has superseded a more ancient fortification. The settlement itself did not contain more than a hundred houses, or a population of possibly five hundred persons, according to my informant, the old shepherd who had compared his home somewhat disparagingly with the more flourishing Gāz.

The gateway which formed the entrance to the townlet was a portal of modern date, leading into a small square from which there were narrow, lanelike streets bordered by high walls. No traces of real antiquity could I see. If Tak be Tagae, the signs of the past have gone. The meaning of the name of the place is open to some question. The natives could answer nothing except that it was 'Tak.' According to General Schindler, *Tāk* is derived from an Old Persian word denoting 'vine.'² My own feeling is that *Tāk* means 'arch,' a common word in Persian, as in the name of the park *Tāk-i Būstān*, 'Garden Arch,' near Kermanshah.³ This explanation — despite the lack of local information on the subject of the etymology — may have something to do with the tunnel, or arched vault, in the mountains near Tak, which was described in the tenth century by Ibn Fakiḥ of Hamadan.⁴ The suggestion is at least worth considering.

¹ On the Persian term *Yankī Dūnyā*, 'New World,' which looks seductively like 'Yankee Doodle,' see *Persia Past and Present*, p. 346.

² See Houtum-Schindler, in *Zt. Ges. f. Erdkunde*, 12. 217, n. 1; To-

maschek, *Zur. hist. Topog. Pers.* 1. 224.

³ See Jackson, *Persia*, p. 214.

⁴ The passage from Ibn Fakiḥ al-Hamadani is cited at length by Yakut, 8. 490. 10 (though abridged in the edition of Yakut by De Goeje, 5. 810.



FORTIFIED WALLS OF TAK



MODERN GATEWAY AT TAK

Even if Tak as a whole did not look antique to me, I feel positive that it did not have a materially different aspect in the days of Alexander, any more than did a dozen towns which I saw later on the line of his march through Transcaspia and Turkistan. I wondered if he, or if Antiochus after him, saw at Tak the same sort of children with heads stained to a faded chocolate color from the henna with which they had been rubbed. I fancy that the women may have veiled their faces

9-12), and reads as follows in the translation made for me by Dr. Yohannan (compare also the version by Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 875, and Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, 2. 53-54): 'Tak was the treasure-house of the ancient kings of Persia. Minuchihr was the first who used it as a treasury. It is an almost inaccessible tunnel in a place in the mountains and is difficult even for one on foot to penetrate. The entrance to the tunnel is like a narrow door, after entering which, one walks for nearly a mile in absolute darkness. It then opens out on a broad site, like a town, surrounded on all sides by lofty mountains which no one can climb on account of their height; or if he did, he could not get down again. In this large opening there are caverns and spacious chambers, whose innermost recesses can only partly be reached. In the middle of the place is an abundant spring [i.e. the Fountain of Chashmah-i Ali, cf. p. 172, above], which gushes out from a great rock and then sinks down again under another rock, about ten cubits away, and no one knows what becomes of the water. In the time of the ancient kings of Persia two men used to guard the entrance to this tunnel, having with them rope ladders to let down when one of them wished to descend; but they kept by them everything that was necessary, even

to last for several years. This state of affairs, with regard to the tunnel and the treasury, continued without change, just as described, until the Arabs came into power. They sought to make the ascent, but were unsuccessful, until the time when Masiyar assumed the government of Tabaristan [ninth century A.D.]. He set his eye on this place and encamped before it for a long time, until his hopes to ascend it were fulfilled. One of his men clambered up; and when he had reached the top, he let down ropes and drew the others up, Masiyar himself being among the number. In this way he discovered the money, arms, and treasures that were concealed in the caves. He placed all these in charge of some faithful followers before leaving. The place remained in his possession until he was captured [in 888 A.D.]; and the persons who were in charge then either surrendered or died. It is told by Sulaiman ibn Abdallah that there was a place by this Tak, into which if anybody threw anything foul or unclean, great clouds would arise and pour rain down upon it until it was cleansed and purified of the filth. This is well known in that region, and no two inhabitants of the country question the truth of it, so that nothing unclean is left there either in summer or in winter.' [See also p. 174, above.]

from his soldiers and fled as they did from us ; but I imagine that the men were forced to bestir themselves more vigorously when the conqueror's troops scoured the town in search of provisions than was the case when we rode quietly about. Nevertheless, as a halting-place on the first stage of a march under the hot summer's sun, Tagae, or Tak, doubtless offered much that was acceptable, and we felt rewarded by the visit as we galloped away (the white donkey still in the lead) on our road back to Damghan before taking up our journey anew.

CHAPTER XIV

AMONG HISTORIC SITES

'Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom
Of leaden-coloured even, and fiery hills
Mingling their flames with twilight on the verge
Of the horizon.'

—SHELLEY, *Alastor*.

WITH the help of commands, threats, coaxings, and bakshish, in varying proportions according as they proved effective, we managed to have everything ready for an unusually quick start from Damghan on our easterly road. Our servant, Agopian, was promptly in his place in the baggage-vehicle; our own seats were resumed in the phaeton; and off we started with *khudd hāfiz*, 'good-by,' from the head of the caravansarai as we drove out into the plain long before the sun had risen.

Daybreak revealed an immense expanse before us to the east, with the distant ranges of mountains, which we had constantly kept on the right and on the left throughout the journey, now all aglow with the flaming dawn. At times the plain was merely a stretch of barren sand incrustated here and there with salt; again it took on the rich brownish tinge that means fertility, and then a series of villages, surrounded by green fields, brightened the level sweep as far as the eye could scan. The peasant farmer, a descendant of the *vāstrya fshuyant*, or agriculturist in Zoroaster's day, could be seen at work; and to his activity in ancient times was largely due the prosperity once reigning in the historic sites through which we were to pass.

In about an hour's time we were passing a settlement of considerable antiquity, though in ruinous condition, called Bosta-

jan;¹ while some distance beyond it rose Bak, with an artificial mound crowned by a deserted and crumbling small fortress called Kalah-i Bak, or 'Citadel of Bak.'

Green villages ensued, and on the outskirts of one of them I remember noticing, as I had noticed elsewhere in Persia, a temporary receiving vault for a body till it could be carried to Mashad or to Karbala. These receptacles, built of clay covered with gypsum or white plaster, are constructed like a small house, about ten feet long by five broad, and as many high, or just large enough to allow the corpse to be placed in it and removed without difficulty. I wondered whether these whitened sepulchres were anything like the Avestan *kata*, or temporary house, which Zoroaster enjoined to be built for use in winter or in stormy weather, when it might not be feasible to remove the body to the Tower of Silence.²

The abundant *kanāts* for irrigation and the carefully tilled fields showed why the numerous sentinel towers of mud had been a necessity in the past, when the Turkomans used to dash across the mountains and rob the rich plain of its booty. No wonder that the townlet of Mahman-dust, with its hospitable name of 'Guest-friend,' served often as a welcome place of retreat from those cruel marauders.³ Before a dozen more miles had been left behind we were passing through a large old village, Dah Mullah, or 'Priest Village,' whose high-sounding ecclesiastical title seemed little in keeping with its decrepit fortress and ill-repaired walls.⁴ Like others along the route, the place

¹ For a mention of Bostajan see Curzon, 1. 380, and Euan Smith, in Goldsmid, *Eastern Persia*, 1. 380.

² See Vend. 5. 10-13.

³ The name of the place, Mahman-dust, appears in Mustaufi (1340 A.D.), see Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, p. 368. The corresponding station more commonly mentioned in the Arab-Persian itineraries (see p. 178, above) is Al-Haddadah, which is still the name of one of eleven villages between here

and Dah Mullah, as mentioned by Shah Nasir ad-Din, *Diary*, p. 81. Brief mentions of Mahman-dust are found in Truilhier (1807), *Mémoire*, pp. 155-156, and Curzon, 1. 285.

⁴ This is the same as Dah Dayah, 'Village of the Preacher,' in the Arab-Persian geographers (see above, p. 178, note); it was visited by Van Mierop (about 1740), see Hanway's *Caspian Sea*, 1. 358 = 3 ed. 1. 247; and by Forster, *Voyage*, 2. 262.

enjoys an unenviable reputation because of the poisonous bug of Persia, *shabgaz*, whose bite occasions severe fever, and sometimes even results in death.¹

Change after change of horses had been effected since our start at daylight ; and now, as we began the long ascent of the plain rising towards the city of Shahrud, the sun glowed with a scorching blaze, while clouds of suffocating dust filled the air. We breathed a sigh of relief from our choked throats when, about noon, we caught a glimpse of the soft green jujube trees (*sinjīd*) rising in thick clusters behind the walls of the city.

Shahrud lies at the foot of a mountain spur, and is washed by the river Shāh-rūd, 'King River,' from which it derives its name. No mention of the city appears to be found in the early Arab and Persian geographers, although they all refer to its neighbor, the historic Bustam, so that it may have come into prominence later.² It is the capital of the district Shahrud-Bustam, and a successful business rival to its senior, although Bustam remains the residence of the governor.³ Shahrud owes much of its commercial welfare to its advantageous position, for it lies nearly midway between Teheran and Mashad, on the great Khurasan route, and forms the meeting-place of a number of important highroads, especially those leading to Astrabad and the Caspian on the north, and from Yazd, Tabbas, and other places on the south. The strategical importance of the place, as well as its mercantile value, has been recognized by military authorities, but its old fortress of mud would offer little defence in present-day warfare.⁴

¹ See Euan Smith, in Goldsmid, *Eastern Persia*, 1. 381, and O'Donovan, *Merv Oasis*, 1. 393-394.

² On this matter see Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, p. 366, n. 1.

³ The question of the relative supremacy between Shahrud and Bustam has been variously answered by different writers during the past century, preference to the one or the other being given as follows : Truilhier (1807),

p. 158, Bustam ; Fraser (1822), p. 342, Shahrud ; Euan Smith (1872), 1. 378, Bustam ; Curzon (1889), 1. 283, Bustam ; but Shah Nasir ad-Din (1865), *Diary*, p. 89, expressly notes, 'The population and place of Bustam is smaller than Shahrud, but its buildings are larger and better.' This was my own impression.

⁴ See Curzon, 1. 282 ; Fraser, pp. 342-343.

The bazars of Shahrud, though small, appeared to be well stocked, and the tradesmen were busy and alert. Not the least attractive booth, we found, was one devoted to the sale of sweetmeats and savories ; particularly palatable was a dish made from rice (*birinj*), though somewhat uncertain in its effect upon the digestion.

We arranged after luncheon to devote the rest of the day to the old city of Bustam, or Bostām, as it is now pronounced, the earlier form of the name being Bistām. It lies three or four miles north-northeast of Shahrud, in a valley surrounded by hills. Three spirited white horses were hitched to our phaeton and (in Persian style) dashed away before the driver had time fairly to grasp the reins and spring on to the box ; nor did they slacken their pace until we reached the historic city.

Bustam consists really of two parts : an ancient portion, now in ruins, and the later part of the town (though also old), which enjoys the sanctity of containing the pilgrim shrine of Shaikh Bayazid, a Moslem saint who lived in the ninth century of our era. These two sections are separated from each other by less than half a mile ; and I chose to visit the more ancient quarter first.

This older foundation, which formed the citadel, was mentioned by Mis'ar Muhalhil (941 A.D.) when he described the rest of the town. He wrote concerning the stronghold as follows : —

‘ Over against the city, on an elevation, rises a large strong citadel, provided with solid walls, and girt with bastions and towers. Its foundation is attributed to [the Sasanian king] Shapur Dhu 'l-Aktaf (Sapor II, 309–379 A.D.).’¹

The center of this ruined site is the stronghold thus referred to, and it is still called *Kal'ah-i Kuhnah*, ‘ the Old Citadel,’ being possibly even older than Shapur's time, for one local tradition associates Bustam with the mythical age of Hoshang at the beginning of Persian history.

¹ This statement by Mis'ar Muhalhil is quoted by Yakut, see Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 104 ; cf. also Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, p. 366.



A TURKOMAN CARAVAN



A HALT FOR TEA ON THE ROAD



AMONG THE RUINS OF ANCIENT BUSTAM



PART OF THE PRECINCT OF BAYAZID'S SHRINE AT BUSTAM

The rectangular enclosure measures about two hundred and fifty yards on each side, following the points of the compass ; and the huge walls of earth and rubble, which reminded me of the ramparts that crown the hill at Hamadan, are between fifteen and twenty feet thick. They are now in a crumbling condition, but their solidity gives the idea of strength noted by Muhalhil, if not of permanence.

Several portions of the bulwarks were fallen from sheer weight and decay, and were lying in great masses here and there within the circumvallation, or were filling parts of the moat from whose earth they were originally raised. The northern wall and the north end of the western rampart were best preserved, and spaces within the enceinte were devoted to gardens under good cultivation, but the scene on the whole was one of utter desolation. My guide stood for a moment, as I photographed him, upon a site that may once have been occupied by a banquet hall of forgotten revel, now sunk into unrecognizable dust. I asked him whether any inscription had been found among the ruins, and he pointed without hesitation to a spot where he said that a *sang-i nipishtah*, or 'stone with writing,' had been dug up shortly before. I had no real reason to doubt the truth of his statement, since he looked for the stone, expecting to find it, and seemed surprised at its disappearance since his last visit to the site. I offered a reward in case the relic could be recovered, and some later traveler may possibly reap the advantage of adding another link in the chain connecting the history of Bustam with Sasanian times.

It was now time to wend my way back southward across a sparsely occupied stretch to the main portion of the city, guided ever by the blue towers near the Mosque of Shaikh Bayazid. Entering through a heavy gateway, flanked by high rounded bastions which strengthen the city wall at regular intervals, I found myself in the more modern section of the town—if a settlement with a history of a thousand years and over can be called modern.

This quarter, we know, is certainly as old as 874 A.D., when Bayazid was buried here; and a still earlier date (unless it refers to the ruined section already described) seems to be assured by Yakut's statement that Bustam (or Bistam, as it was then called) was taken, without resistance, by the army of the Caliph Omar in 640 A.D.¹ This date for the town's existence would harmonize well with the tradition that ascribes its foundation to Bistam, an interesting figure in Persian history of the sixth century, presuming this to be the same prince as Bustam Mirza (the title *mīrzā*, when appended, not prefixed, means prince), to whom the city owes its name, and whose tomb is one of the chief sanctuaries of the place.² The historic Bistam, or Gustahm (the older pronunciation of the name Bustam, from the ancient Vistakhma), was a prince of the royal blood and uncle to Khusrau Parviz, or Chosroes II, whose father he had slain. Bistam sided for a time with his nephew in wars that involved relations with the Byzantine Empire, but later turned against him, setting himself up as an independent ruler until treacherously put to death at the instigation of Chosroes in 596 A.D.³ There may be some question as to whether the valiant warrior and the Moslem saint were actually identical, but the likelihood is strong, as Mordtmann, in particular, has shown.⁴

¹ Yakut gives '18 or 19' A.H. = 640 A.D.; cf. Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 105. See also *Shāh Nāmah*, tr. Mohl, folio ed., 6. 650.

² See Fraser, p. 336. The historic Bistam, or Bustam Mirza, was apparently apotheosized later and canonized as a Moslem saint, being called Imam-zadah Muhammad Bustam Mirza. See Mordtmann, *Hekatompylos*, pp. 499-518, and consult the works referred to in the next note. The fuller name, Imam-zadah Muhammad Bustam Mirza, is given by Sarre, *Denkmäler*, Textband, p. 117.

³ For the historic data about Bistam

see the able discussion by Mordtmann, *Hekatompylos*, in *Sitzb. Münchener Akad.*, Jahrgang 1869, pp. 499-509, and compare the material given by Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, s.v. *Wistaxma*, p. 371, Marburg, 1895, and in *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 542-543; also Nöldeke, *Aufsätze zur persischen Geschichte*, pp. 122-124, Leipzig, 1887. Furthermore, on the death of Bistam by treachery, see Isfandiār (1216 A.D.) in Browne, *History of Tabaristān by Isfandiār*, p. 35, London, 1905; and Tabari, *Chronique, sur la version persane de Bel'amī*, tr. Zotenberg, 2. 303.

⁴ See Mordtmann, pp. 517-518.



BUSTAM AND ITS SACRED BUILDINGS

In the tenth century Mis'ar Muhalhil (941 A.D.), already cited, gives some accurate information regarding the place, though part of his data are rather fantastic:—

'Bistam is a large fortified place resembling, rather, a small city. The famous Shaikh Abu Yazid al-Bistami was born here. The name *Bistāmī* is given to a species of yellow apple, of excellent flavor, that comes from this town and is exported throughout Irak. The place has two peculiarities: one is, love is a sentiment unknown to its inhabitants, and if a stranger suffers from this passion, he need only partake of the water of Bistam to find his passion quenched. The other peculiarity is that here nobody suffers from ophthalmia. The water has a bitter taste, but when taken on an empty stomach it is very healthful and is used medicinally in special cases. Aloes lose their scent when brought here, even the best aloes from India; on the contrary, all other perfumes, musk, amber, etc., take on an added aroma. The soil produces a great quantity of small snakes, of reptiles, and of bugs, whose bite is very dangerous.'¹

Some of the other references in the Arab-Persian writers to Bustam (then spelled Bistam) have been given above (p. 178), in connection with the notes on Damghan and Tak. It may be of interest to add to them that Ibn Haukal (978 A.D.) refers to the fertility of this region, which abounds in gardens; and Mukaddasi (985) says that its chief mosque in the market-place was 'like a citadel'; while Nasir-i Khusrau (1046) seems to account Bustam as the most important city in the whole province.² Yet alas, in the thirteenth century Bustam, like its neighbors, suffered the ravages of Chingiz Khan and his Mongol hordes, though happily their victorious sway left monuments of noble architecture, which give to the city its chief renown today.³ From the fourteenth century onward Bustam shared in the further history of the territory in which it is located; and, as already noted, it still retains the honor of being the

¹ This passage from Mis'ar Muhalhil is quoted by Yakut, see Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* pp. 104-105.

² For references see Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, p. 365.

³ See Skrine and Ross, *The Heart of Asia*, pp. 159, 174, 233; and compare Horn, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 573-575; also Sarre, *Denkmäler*, Textband, p. 116.

residence of the governor of the local district of Bustam-Shahrud, even if Shahrud be now the capital.¹

The monuments of Bustam are noteworthy, one of the most remarkable being a peculiar round, fluted tower, with conical roof, adjoining the Jami' Masjid, or chief mosque, in which are buried some saintly remains. In appearance this polygonal structure resembles certain related towers found at Rai, Varamin, Damavand, and Radkan;² and it has been fittingly compared to an upright roller of some huge crimping-machine with rectangular flutings. The bricks used in its construction are plain and not large, the only decoration being a double band of ornamental inscriptions on the body of the tower, just below the cupola top, and there are traces of blue glazed tiles that once covered the roof. The inscriptional bands on the tower give no date, but a tablet in the mosque, as Fraser states, records that the building was erected in 1300 by order of Ghazan Khan, the brother of the same Mongol ruler who raised the mosque of Shaikh Bayazid.³

The most important architectural ruins of the city, however, are grouped around the historic shrine of the patron saint Bayazid. The age of these structures differs considerably, ranging roughly from the ninth to the fifteenth century; yet there is a certain symmetry which harmonizes the whole and renders

¹ Cf. Ibn Batutah (1340), 3. 82.

² See Fraser, p. 340, and especially Sarre, *Denkmäler*, Textband, p. 118, and compare Jackson, *Persia*, pp. 436-437. A distantly analogous structure is the tower of Gunbad-i Kabus on the river Gurgan, pictured by Sykes, *Sixth Journey in Persia*, in *The Geographical Journal*, 37. 2, 9, 14.

³ The date 700 A.H. = 1300 A.D. is given by Fraser, p. 340, and the name of the builder as Muhammad ibn Husain, son of Abu Talib al-Muhandiz, by order of Sultan Ghazan Khan Muhammad Sikandar Sani, King of

Iran and Turan. This Ghazan (1295-1304) was the brother and predecessor of Sultan Khudabandah (1304-1316); see also Howorth, *History of the Mongols*, 3. 393, 530-532. Horn, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 575, took Khoda-bandah to be Ghazan's son in stead of his brother. Sykes, *Sixth Journey*, pp. 150-151, notes that the town is called 'Kashāna,' which signifies 'hall,' and is a title difficult to explain, though he offers a doubtful etymological suggestion that Kashana might contain some association with the name of Ghazan as Khasan.

the group interesting from the standpoint of architecture as well as of history.¹

The entire precinct about Bayazid's sacred grave covers a considerable area of ground, and is entered by a double court, an outer and an inner enclosure, both of which are in a rather dilapidated condition. In the exterior court is a ruined madrasah, or Moslem college, built by Shah Rukh (1404-1447), son of the great Tamerlane. The entrance into the inner court is through a gateway artistically ornamented by raised designs in plaster and decorated with colored glazed tiles. Beyond this, across the square, is a handsomely embellished arched portal, on either side of which stand two conical-topped mausoleums that perpetuate hallowed names. Near the left one of these lies Bayazid's tomb; while still again to the left is located an old flat-roofed mosque crowned by a fine minaret which imparts to the group its chief dignity.

The two cone-pointed mausoleums have each a historic interest irrespective of their architectural merit. The one on the left, forming part of the mosque just mentioned, is the tomb of the glorified founder of the city, Bustam Mirza, who, as already recorded, lived fifteen centuries ago. Its pointed roof, below which are alternating bands of dark and light blue fayence, retains traces of azure tiles and is surmounted by a double spindle of metal, that is now bent at an angle. Story says that the remains which lie interred beneath the monument are undecaying, the flesh, nails, and hair being all intact; but it might be against the dictates of wisdom, as well as of hygiene, to undertake to verify the truth of this statement.²

¹ The best description of these monuments, illustrated by plates and cuts, is again to be found in Sarre, *Denkmäler persischer Baukunst*, Lieferung 1, p. 3; 2, p. 3; 5, p. 1; and Textband, pp. 116-117. This account, supplemented by data from Fraser and Khanikoff, has been used to help out my own notes made on the spot, and

I gratefully acknowledge the indebtedness.

² Fraser (p. 337) did not venture to test the truth of the legend regarding the preservation of the original tenant but 'a box had been deposited in a forty square, which was reserved to the

The other mausoleum, standing a short distance away to the right, is like its companion in form and construction. It is the shrine of the blessed Kasim (or Imamzadah Kasim Khan), the contemporary and friend of Bayazid, and the sharer in his sanctity. Its conical roof, below which runs a band of bluish tiles, embellished by graceful arabesques, is practically the counterpart of its fellow, as already indicated, except that its caption is a simple knob of metal.¹

The mosque itself forms the lower left-hand corner of the enclosure, but is unimpressive because of its low, flat roof, the only noticeable feature being the four blind arches in the outer wall. Inscriptions in the interior, noted by Fraser, imply that the edifice was built in 1299 by the Mongol ruler Khudabandah Khan, though Khanikoff found an earlier date (1261-62) in the oratory, so that it may be still older, and may have been restored.²

The minaret, which is built into a corner of the mosque, is the *chef d'œuvre* of the entire group. Rising from a low square base, it lifts its cylindrical shaft of yellowish unglazed bricks to a graceful height, though lower than its compeers in the cities of Damghan and Semnan, already described.³ It lacks any trace of colored tiles, but its raised geometric patterns and circling belts of Koranic texts make full compensation, not the least impressive being the fretted stalactite work on its elaborate summit, though the effect is now diminished by the loss of the crowning gallery, which reveals only a bald, round pillar with an opening from the interior staircase.⁴ As a whole

details regarding the exterior of this mausoleum, accompanied by illustrative plates, see Sarre, *Denkmäler*, Lieferung 1, p. 3; Textband, p. 117.

¹ A hundred years ago, Fraser, p. 337, commented on the well-kept condition of the sepulchre.

² The date seen by Fraser, p. 336, in 1822, was 699 A.H. = 1299-1300 A.D.; the date observed in the oratory by Khanikoff (*Mémoire*, p. 79 f.) in 1858,

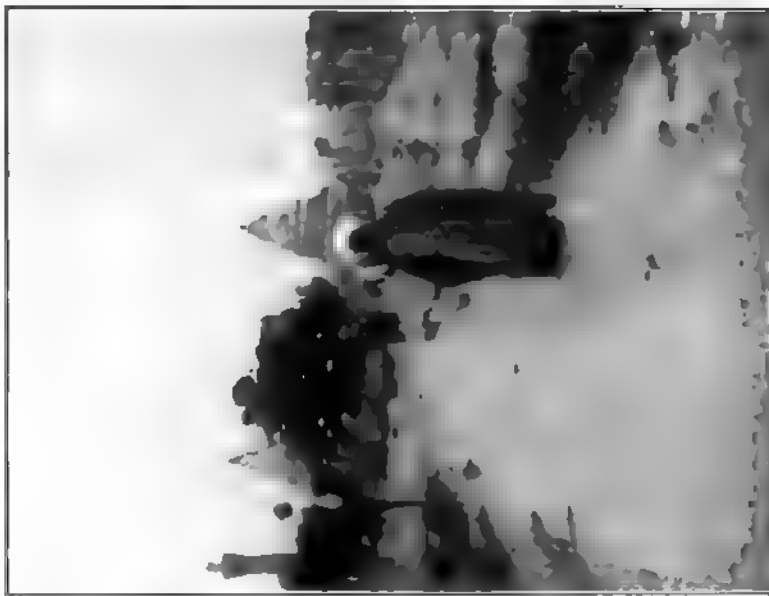
was 660 A.H. = 1261-62 A.D. Sarre, who quotes both these authorities (in *Denkmäler*, Textband, p. 117), is inclined to regard the mosque as being one of the oldest structures in the entire precinct.

³ Its height is between 40 and 50 feet, as rightly observed by Fraser, p. 337.

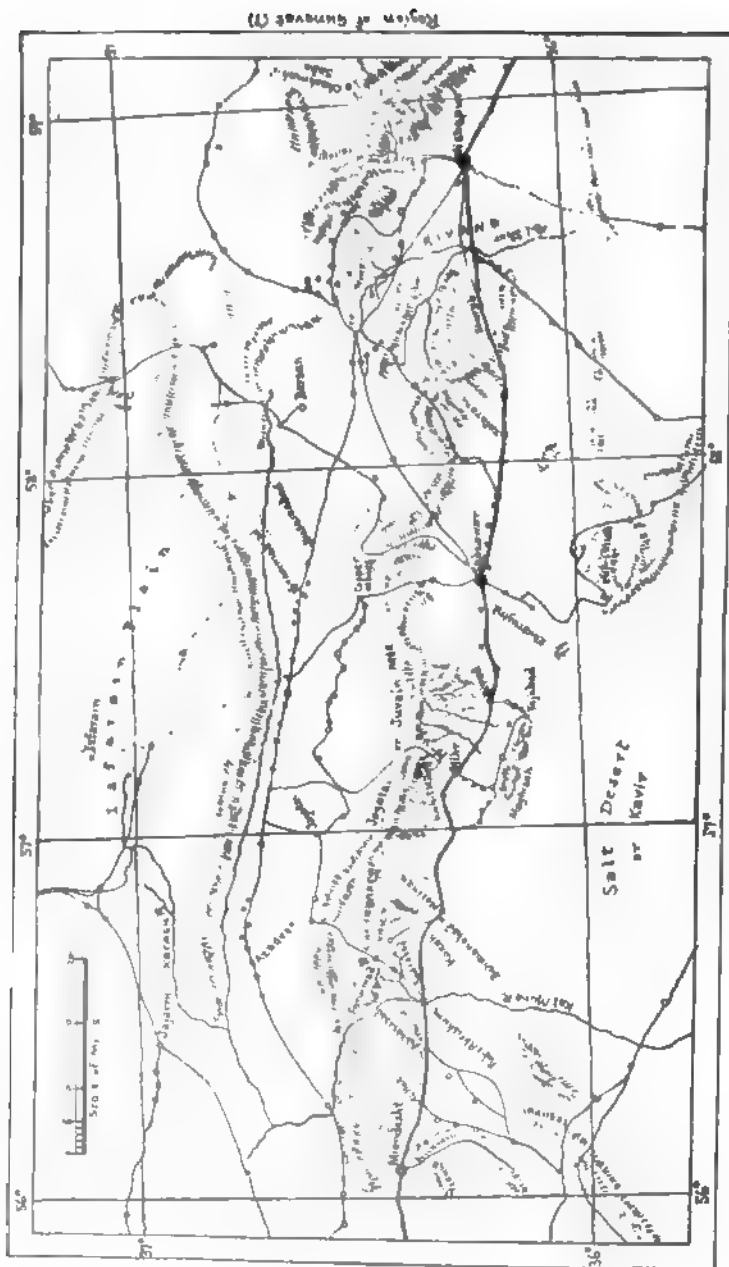
⁴ For some added details cf. Khanikoff, *Mémoire*, pp. 78-80.



THE SHAKING MINARET AND THE MAUSOLEUM AT BUSTAM



THE CHIEF PRIEST AT BAYAZID'S SHRINE



it is an excellent example of Muhammadan workmanship in the eleventh or twelfth century, to which period Sarre assigns it ;¹ and it has well stood the test of time, including the frequent oscillations to which it is constantly subjected, for it belongs to the class of shaking minarets in Persia, and a man standing on the top can make it sway noticeably from side to side.² To give many details regarding the minaret may, I hope, not seem irrelevant ; for a study of these structures has a special interest, not only because of the question of their supposed historic connection with the steeples of Christian churches and the ziggurat towers of the ancient Assyrian and Babylonian temples,³ but also from the practical standpoint of the brick-mason's art. Many a lesson for the artistic composition of brick in the modern factory chimney, and otherwise, is to be learned from these old-time monuments of the Moslem builder's art.

Shaikh Bayazid's shrine, though the simplest of all, is the most sacred monument in the whole collection. It is an ordinary stone tomb, square, and small in size, standing near the left-hand mausoleum ; and beside it is another small domed vault of a later date.⁴ Tradition has it that in 874 A.D., at the age of ninety, Bayazid suffered martyrdom by stoning at the hands of his fellow-citizens, who later, however, sanctified his memory and made his tomb a place of pilgrimage ; and the tradition seems to be borne out by the stones which the pilgrims, recalling his fate, still piously throw upon his humble grave.

¹ See Sarre, *Denkmäler*, Textband, p. 117.

² Different explanations of this phenomenon, which is looked upon by the natives with considerable wonder, are given ; see Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 283 ; Sarre, *Denkmäler*, Lief. 1, p. 3.

³ Gottheil, *Origin and History of the Minaret*, in *JAOS*. 30. 132-154.

⁴ The small tomb with vaulted dome, adjoining Bayazid's, is that of Amir Azam Khan (so the name was given

to me), an Afghan chief of the Barazkai family, in the middle of the nineteenth century. He had hoped for the throne of Afghanistan under Persian support, but was forestalled by his brother ; and, when on his way back to Teheran to remonstrate, he was slain in gallant combat with a band of Turkomans, near al-Hak, and was buried at Bustam. See Eastwick, 2. 173 ; and cf. Sykes, *Sixth Journey*, p. 150.

1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem or issue that needs to be addressed. This involves gathering information and understanding the context of the problem.

2. Once the problem is identified, the next step is to define the objectives and goals of the project. This helps to clarify what needs to be achieved and provides a clear direction for the team.

3. The third step is to develop a plan or strategy to address the problem. This involves breaking down the problem into smaller, manageable tasks and determining the resources needed to complete each task.

4. The fourth step is to implement the plan. This involves putting the strategy into action and monitoring progress to ensure that the project is on track.

5. The final step is to evaluate the results of the project. This involves assessing the outcomes against the objectives and goals and identifying any areas for improvement.

[illegible]

any History of Persia, 428, 429.
The name and nationality of Bayazid
in the last scene of the edition of *The
House of Akhmet* by Christian Hüywerl,

[illegible]

¹ *Proc. Ent. Soc. Lond.* **1898**, **1**: 427.

1 400 Francs p. an.

⁴ See *Encyc. op. cit.* 2. 272, 364; and Nicholson, *The Kashf al-Mahjūb*, pp. 184-185.

sion of his person that Kasim, with others, was slain in the fray. Upon learning this on his return, Bayazid rebuked his townsmen so vehemently that they stoned him to death, and thus both the saintly men lost their lives. The inhabitants of Bustam were so fortunate as to secure the bodies of the two for burial; while the natives of Shahrud had to content themselves with the remains of seven of their companions who fell in the riot and whose corpses were interred under a hillock, still called Haft Tan, 'Seven Bodies,' near the scene of the tragic affair.¹

Throughout my visit I found the priests who were in charge of the buildings most kind, the chief mullah himself helping to explain the points of interest, and even requesting me to take a photograph of him when I bade him adieu. Rejoining my comrade, I found that he had meanwhile made himself at home among the natives in the bazar, joining them in their afternoon tea, watching them at their occupations, and being initiated by them into the mysteries of primitive spinning; and a souvenir of the lesson, in the form of a crude spindle, has been preserved as a keepsake in the carpet mills at Yonkers.

Our driver was ready now with his prancing horses, and away we galloped back to Shahrud, where a fresh relay was found waiting to whirl us along again on our eastern road.

¹ This story is given at length by Fraser, pp. 338-339.

CHAPTER XV

OVER THE ANCIENT BATTLE-GROUND OF THE WARS BETWEEN IRAN AND TURAN

‘Is Iran’s pride then gone for ever,
Quench’d with the flame in Mithra’s caves?’

—MOORE, *Lalla Rookh*.

THE stages of our next twenty-four hours’ journey bore the ominous name of the ‘Marches of Terror,’ a title gained them by the cruel forays of the Turkomans, who from time immemorial have poured down from the north through the passes along the route and have deluged the plain in blood. A part of the tract to be traversed, moreover, was the scene of some of the fiercest battles between the remote ancestors of these same sons of Turan and the Iranians, almost three thousand years ago, when victory finally lighted on the standards of the Zoroastrian faith. Today not one follower of Zoroaster’s ancient creed treads the historic roadway, and only a few traces of the old footsteps can be discovered, so thoroughly has Islam blotted out every vestige; yet there may be a grim nemesis in the fact that at these points the Moslem pilgrims themselves, on their journey to Mashad over this same route, have been obliged, for a thousand years and more, to guard their bands by armed escorts against the old-time marauders, though doubtless they gain additional religious merit from the perils incurred on the way. The dangers of the route have been graphically portrayed by all travelers who have passed over it down to the day when Turkistan, or Turan, came into the hands of Russia, a generation ago, and Persia found relief at last from her inveterate foe.¹

¹ On the Turkoman forays see, for example, Fraser (1822), pp. 347–360; Conolly (1830), *Journey to the North of India*, 1. 229–231; Ferrier (1845),



INTERIOR OF THE CARAVANSARAI AT MAZINAN (p. 208)



HAVING AT MIANDASHT



WATCHTOWER AT AL-HAK



A CHANGE OF RELAYS

As we galloped forth from Shahrud, the moon looked sullen indeed, and the mighty clouds around it, torn into fantastic shapes like Chinese dragons that might be emblematic of the Mongol ravagers in the past, were soon flooding the plain with showers of rain as we passed a station still called by its old name in the early Arab itineraries, Badasht ('By the Plain'),¹ and found a new relay of horses waiting at Khairabad. The remains of the ruined village, across the roadway from the present *chāpār-khānah*, have stood for over a century as a memorial of the Turkoman raids and well sustained the name of Khair-abad, 'No-abode,' though its appellation (with a different understanding of the first member of the compound) appears once to have signified 'Good-abode.'² The desolate condition of the place may account for the fact that Shah Nasir ad-Din 'ordered it to be rebuilt,' when he stopped here on his pilgrimage to the shrine at Mashad in 1865, as noted in his *Diary*, p. 96; and perhaps we ourselves owed to that very mandate the simple post-house at which we rested.

Just as we were leaving this halting-place, the queen of the sky came out in all her beauty, and the trail over the plain lay clear before us. There was no longer occasion, as there used to be, to fear marauders from Turan, and forward we dashed, assured that the road was safe.

The bright moonlight at Farashabad, during a change of relays three hours later, gave an excellent chance to inspect two picturesque old citadels that must have done service in bygone days, although now in ruins.³ At the moment I did

pp. 78-82; Eastwick (1863), 2. 169-174; Bassett (1878), pp. 199-203; O'Donovan (1880), 1. 392, 407, 415; and compare Curzon, 1. 281.

¹ See above, p. 178, note.

² So Bassett, p. 199. Khairabad had long been in ruins when Fraser (p. 359) passed it in 1822; so also in 1881, when passed by Clerk (*JRGS.*

31. 41), and in 1862, when seen by Eastwick (2. 168).

³ Both of these fortresses faced nearly north (in the direction of Turan), and one stood almost in front of the other, separated from it only by a short space. The southern one was the better preserved of the two, and also the larger; and was noticeable

not know that in a valley across the mountains, six miles southeast of this village, and near the station of Armian, or Armia, on the lower road, there stands an immense plane-tree, which the natives claim to be several thousand years old, and whose enormous branches are fabled to shade the grave of the prophet Jeremiah. The legend is recorded by Shah Nasir ad-Din in his *Diary*, p. 98, and he adds that tradition ascribes the name of the place itself, which he gives as *Armia*, to that of the prophet Jeremiah (in Persian, *Armiah*), though that is, of course, fanciful.¹ Had I been aware of this folk-saga at the time, I might have been tempted to make the detour in order to see the tree, not so much on account of the legend connected with Jeremiah's name as because of the possibility that this tree, whose shadow extends for 'a hundred miles,' might have some distant bearing upon the much discussed problem of Marco Polo's 'Abre i Sol,' which Houtum-Schindler claims to have been the famous cypress planted by Zoroaster, and not the 'sun tree,' as generally supposed.²

A halt at the old settlement of Maiamai, which is abundantly watered by streams from the lofty rocky mountain that over-

for its huge bastions. The northern one was somewhat smaller, though about a hundred by two hundred yards square, and was evidently older. Its condition was rather ruinous, but a part of the Burj, or tower, now crumbling, still remained in the north-west corner. This circular enclosure was built of brick, showing traces of a coating of clay and mortar, and was crowned by a dome, which had partially collapsed. The interior of the structure presented a chamber, each of whose four sides contained an arch of brick, solidly backed, so as to form four shallow vaults; and there was also a smaller arch that looked as if it might have opened on to a door. I recalled certain resemblances to two

ruined structures, of the Sasanian period, at Isfahan and Abarkuh (see my *Persia*, pp. 253-261, 342-344), but it would be hazardous to suggest any association between those remains of Sasanian fire-temples and the ruins under consideration.

¹ I refer to the translation of the *Diary*, p. 98, made for me by Dr. Yohannan. The station is mentioned (without allusion to the legend) as Armian by Curzon, I. 281.

² See Houtum-Schindler, *Marco Polo's Travels*, in *JRAS.* 1909, pp. 154-159; and compare Jackson, *Zoroaster*, pp. 80, 97, 100, 197; likewise Sykes, *Sixth Journey*, in *Geog. Journ.* 37 (1911), p. 160.

hangs it, gave a brief rest in a solidly built caravansarai, erected by Shah Abbas the Second, in 1655, and made almost as strong against the Turkomans as a heavily bastioned fortress.¹ On the heights above the place, which Fraser ascended in 1833, are the remains of two very ancient strongholds, evidently dating from the times of Irano-Turanian warfare before the Muhammadan conquest. Fraser's description of the climb, and the results of his examination, should inspire some zealous young follower of the ancient faith of Zoroaster to emulate the feat, and carefully to study the ruins, whose large Gabr bricks are the best witness to their age.² Local legend naturally associates the remains on this embattled height in some way with the labors of Rustam, and our driver whispered weird tales of lions and tigers to add to our impression of the peaks.

One of the most dreaded of the stages is the rough gorge of Zaidar, some eight miles farther on;³ but our journey through it was signalized by no worse experience (bad though it was) than a runaway of our servant's horses. We hoped that the well-mounted Arab pilgrims whom we met at the next station, Tara Taghi, had better luck with their high-mettled steeds.

I cannot forget the glare of the Persian sun as we reached the great caravansarai of Miandasht—an ancient settlement which can boast of its extreme antiquity, of its capacious accommodations for the caravans that pass under the high portal of its hostelry (due again to Shah Abbas), and of its isolated position in the midst of the plain, arid and glowing,

¹ On Maiamai a century ago (as now) see Truilhier, pp. 250-251; Fraser, pp. 360-361; cf. also Ferrier, pp. 78-79; O'Donovan, 1. 405. Houtum-Schindler, *Zt. Gesellschaft f. Erdkunde*, 12. 218, notes that the spelling of the place with *d* (Maiamaid), as given by the older travelers, is not now to be followed. I find 'Maimad' as early as Ibn Khurdadhbah (834 A.D.),

6. 23, and Kudamah (880 A.D.), 6. 201.

² See the graphic account of the ascent by Fraser, *A Winter's Journey*, 2. 155-164.

³ On the dangers of Turkoman attacks at the ravine Dahinah-i Zaidar, see Fraser, *A Winter's Journey*, 2. 170-175; Eastwick, 2. 169; and O'Donovan, 1. 415-418.

despite the hills that border it south and north.¹ Its very situation accounts for the name *Miān-dasht*, 'Middle-of-the-plain,' which recalled to my memory stories connected in Zoroaster's time with the great plain ahead of us; so all that day, like the next, I lived amid scenes vivid to me with associations of the historic past. But there was no time to tarry at Miandasht longer than for a change of horses; nor again to make anything of a halt at the walled village of Al-Hak, with its square watchtower of brick guarding the road, and its old caravansarai and reservoir near by,² although we did find time to take luncheon, despite flies and heat, at the post-station of Abbasabad,³ where is found a spring of good water and an interesting little community that owes its existence to Shah Abbas, who, about 1600 A.D., transplanted to this place in his kingdom on the edge of a salt desert a band of Christian Georgians, his design being to have them form a part of the frontier guard against the Turkomans.⁴ They have long since abandoned Christianity for Muhammadanism, but traces of their Georgian origin are said still to be noticeable in their speech;⁵ and there is a prevalent idea that their women share in the handsome features for which the Circassian women are renowned, although the passing traveler has little chance to verify the truth of this reputation.⁶ The fortunes of the community as a whole have not

¹ For an excellent description of Miandasht and its caravansarai in 1880 (equally true today) see O'Donovan, 1. 419-420, and compare Ferrier (1845), p. 79; Clerk (1861), *JRGS.* 31. 41.

² Nasir ad-Din Shah (1866), *Diary*, p. 109, says of this caravansarai: 'The date is not known, but it must be very old.' He likewise refers to the irrigation canal and reservoir near it.

³ The older name for Abbasabad appears to have been Asadabad, if we may judge from the itineraries of the Arab-Persian geographers, Ibn Khur-

dadhbah, 6. 23; Kudamah, 6. 201; Ibn Rustah, 7. 170; Istakhri, 1. 215.

⁴ On this Georgian settlement see Truilhier, p. 253; Fraser, pp. 369-371; Ritter, *Erdkunde*, 8. 333-335; and Bassett, pp. 208-210.

⁵ See Khanikoff, p. 83; Eastwick, 2. 279; Bassett, p. 203; and cf. Curzon, 1. 280. Shah Nasir ad-Din, in his *Diary*, p. 110, remarks that 'their physiognomy is like that of the Gûris, and they speak both Turkish and Persian.'

⁶ See Euan Smith, in Goldsmid, *Eastern Persia*, 1. 376.



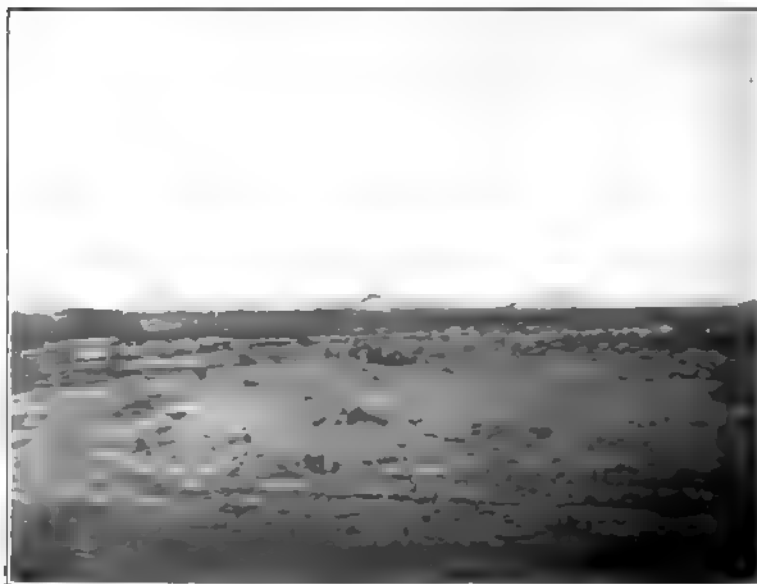
AFHANABAD FROM A DISTANCE



PIL I ABRASHAM BRIDGE OF SILK



FORTRESS NEAR BAHMANABAD ON THE WAY TO MAZINAN



THE BROKEN BOW OF HILLS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GREAT PLAIN

been enhanced by their having to play the role of a buffer colony, although their little town is rather agreeably situated on an elevation defended by a small fort which overlooks the caravansarai, and is to them a home that has made them all but forget their Caucasus birthplace of three hundred years ago. Evidences of a still earlier settlement, ages before their time, are visible in the dilapidated walls of an old Gabr fortress in the hills close by, to the northeast, its name implying that it dates back at least to the Sasanian period of Zoroastrianism; and in the nearer foreground is an old reservoir, the square top of which can easily be seen from the caravansarai.

Water in this region is a precious commodity, if one may judge from the aridity manifested by the tremendous storms of sand that are whirled up from the edges of the distant desert of the Lut on the south. The wind, all that afternoon, was incessant, and was filled with granules of powdery dust as dry as the clay-built relay-station where our next change of horses was made, while little broader than a thread was the salt stream beyond, spanned by the 'Bridge of Silk' (*Pūl-i Abrasham*), whose brick arches once formed the boundary line between Irak and Khurasan.¹

The whole region wore an air of antiquity, so far as one could see amid gusts of blinding sand, augmented by occasional blasts of straw and chaff swept by the wind when passing the threshing-floor of some hamlet. The village of Kakah,² with its old reservoir (*ābdār*) and its dome-roofed houses of mud, looked peculiarly Sasanian, while the hamlet of Bahmanabad near by bore a name that goes back to Zoroastrian times, Bahman being the grandson of the prophet's patron, Vishtasp, and a zealous champion of the faith.³

¹ Fraser, p. 372; Eastwick, 2. 175.

² The location of this village and of the other places along the route may be seen in the sketch-map which my pupil and assistant, Dr. George C. O. Haas, has drawn (after Holdich's *Map*

of Persia) to illustrate this chapter.

³ The population of Bahmanabad in 1807 was given by Truilhier, p. 254, as '30 maisons,' and in 1877 by Houtum-Schindler, *Zt. Ges. f. Erdkunde*, 12 (map), as '150 Häuser.'

Mazinan, the next relay-station, was reached in the face of a hot sirocco wind. This antique town, with a couple of thousand inhabitants, is the center of a group of villages that belong under its jurisdiction; but it can lay no claim to prosperity, and has apparently never recovered from the castigation administered to it in 1831, when, under a rebel chief, it revolted from the Shah's authority.¹ In keeping with its woe-begone appearance are two dilapidated caravansarais; one of which, on the outskirts, boasts Shah Abbas as its builder, while the other, an ancient sarai, is said to owe its foundation to the son of Harun ar-Rashid, of Arabian Nights fame.² The environs of Mazinan abound in ruins of great antiquity, spectral monuments of a forgotten past; and over one of these long-desolate sites the shade of Bahman, already mentioned, still hovers to call memories of Zoroastrianism back from total oblivion.³

This haunting touch of bygone ages was just enough to plunge one into a revery; but there was no time for longer musing, and so again, amid vapors of sand, we galloped out into the mighty plain—a plain filled for me with ancient Persian associations, even to the name of Mithra, angel of truth and light, and guardian genius of the sun, which is still preserved in the name of the village Mihr, our goal as the resting-place for the night.

According to a tradition preserved in the Pahlavi Bundahishn, an old book dealing with the creation and history of the world, the plain along which we were speeding was the scene of the second of the great holy wars between Iran and Turan—the War of the Religion it is called in Zoroastrian

¹ Curzon, 1. 272; Khanikoff, p. 86; cf. Clerk, *JRGS.* 31. 42; O'Donovan, 1. 428. For further notes on Mazinan consult Ritter, *Erdkunde*, 8. 382-383, Berlin, 1838; and Conolly, *Journey*, 1. 236-237.

² Ferrier, p. 100, states that this son was the Caliph Mahmun referred

to below, p. 265; cf. also Curzon, 1. 272.

³ For a description of these ruins and their Gabr associations, see Fraser, pp. 374-375; and, incidentally, compare Ferrier, p. 99; Khanikoff, pp. 85-86.

literature — which established the final triumph of the ancient prophet's faith. The details of the war, so far as tradition gives them, I have discussed in another book, but I may repeat the main points here.¹ Arjasp of Turan, arch-enemy of the Zoroastrian creed, had invaded Iran for the second time, while King Vishtasp was absent in the south of the kingdom. He stormed the capital at Balkh (now in northern Afghanistan), where the fire-temple was; killed the monarch's aged father, who had offered resistance; slew Zoroaster himself at the altar, quenching the sacred flame with the blood of the priests martyred at his side; and then carried devastation and rapine wide throughout the land. These atrocities Arjasp perpetrated unopposed, because the king's valiant son Isfandiar, the great crusader of the faith and the sole match for the invader, was in chains, having been imprisoned in a mountain fortress by his own father, through the machinations of a calumniator.

Meanwhile Vishtasp, having been informed of the invasion, marched with all speed from Seistan to join one of his younger sons who was acting as suzerain in Khurasan, but both were worsted by the Turanians, and the king had to seek refuge in the mountains that were now crowning our horizon on the north.

No one except the imprisoned Isfandiar could save the day, and his father accordingly freed him from his dungeon height. Forgetting all feeling of resentment at his wrongs, the gallant prince entered the fight, routed the hosts of Turan by his valor, and drove Arjasp to defeat and death, thus winning eternal glory for Iran.

In the action, the triumph seems to have been gained at a critical moment by a flanking movement on the part of the Iranians behind a row of hills in the middle of the plain (*miān*

¹ See Jackson, *Zoroaster*, pp. 118–123. Firdausi's *Shāh Nāmāh* gives a poetic account of the war; see Mohl, *Livre des rois*, 4. 367–389, Paris, 1877. With it should be compared the prose

account in the history of Tha'alibi translated by Zotenberg, *Histoire des rois des Perses*, pp. 282–301, Paris, 1900.

dasht), which were now before our very eyes. This mountain-fragment broke off, the story goes, from the great range that runs along the northern border from Tabaristan, on the extreme northwest, to Mount Kumish, already in view in the distance, across the plain on the southeast. The text of the Bundahishn (Bd. 12. 32-34), which describes the scene, may be rendered as follows (my own explanatory additions being added in square brackets): —

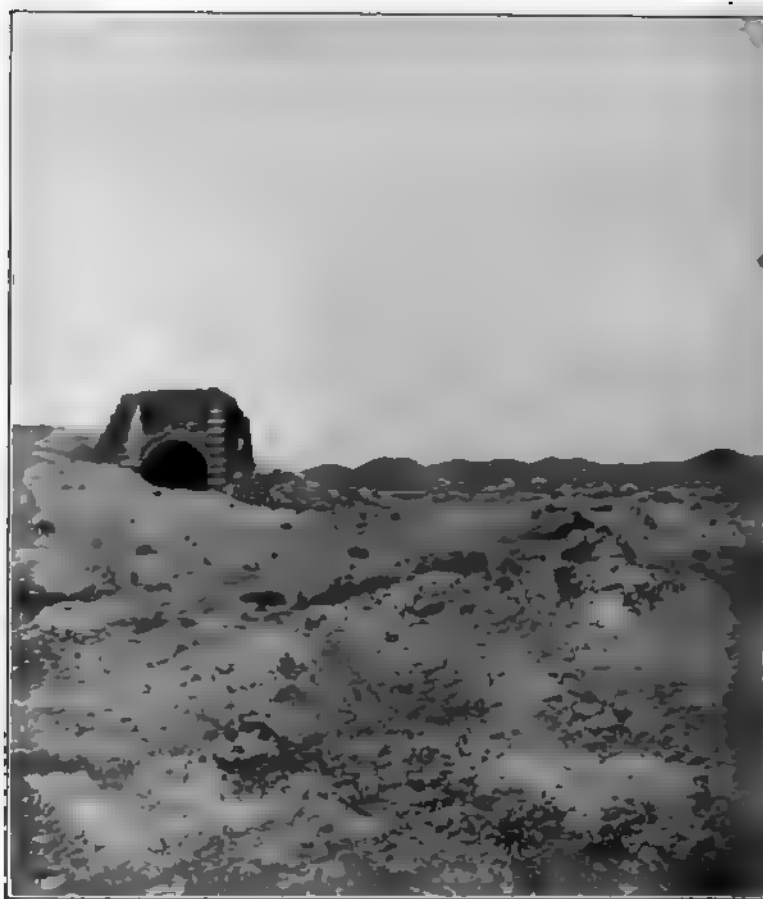
‘From Mount Patashkhvargar [in Tabaristan] to Mount Kumish they call Mount Matufriat (‘Come-to-help’), where Vishtasp routed Arjasp.¹ The mountain which is Mian-dasht (‘Middle-of-the-plain’) was broken off from that mountain there. They say that in the War of the Religion, when confusion came upon the Iranians, it broke off from that mountain² (and) slid down (into) the middle of the plain. The Iranians were saved by it, and it was called by them Matufriat (‘Come-to-help’). Mount Gunavat is on the same Ridge of Vishtasp in that direction by Revand; that is, the Abode of the Burzin Mitro Fire is nine parasangs to the west.’³

¹ According to Bd. 12. 2, 17, 81-82, Mount Patashkhvargar (lit. ‘the mountain by the side of Khvar’) is a portion of the great range of Alburz, starting in Tabaristan and Gilan, and extending to Mount Kumish. Mount Kumish lies across the plain to the southeast of the villages of Mihr and Rivad. The ancient name Kumish is still preserved. In the slightly fuller text of the Iranian Bundahishn (ed. Tahmuras Anklesaria and Behramgore Anklesaria, p. 80, Bombay, 1908), there is a gloss between the names of these two mountains, which appears to mean, ‘The neck was united, connected (with) Mount Kumish.’ For the entire passage, with text and translation, compare also Justi, *Bundehesh*, text, p. 25, transl., p. 14, glossary, p. 98, Leipzig, 1869; Westergaard, *Bundehesh*, text, p. 25, Copenhagen, 1851; Unvalla, *Bundehesh*, lithographed, p. 29, Bombay, 1897; West, *SBE*. 5. 40. Compare also

Justi, *Beiträge zur alten Geographie Persiens*, 2. 3, 4.

² To the word ‘mountain’ the text of the Iranian Bundahishn here appends a word that may be deciphered as *gāh*, ‘place,’ or doubtfully as *siāh*, ‘black,’ or *shāh*, ‘king.’ If either of the latter decipherments be adopted, we might compare the name of the snow-capped mountain in the north, which Euan Smith (in Goldsmid, *Eastern Persia*, 1. 337) calls Siah Kuh (‘Black Mountain’), and which Curzon (*Persia*, 1. 282) speaks of as ‘Shah Kuh (King Mountain), the highest point of the Elburz between Shahrud and Astrabad.’

³ The last sentence is difficult. I have adopted the fuller text of the Iranian Bundahishn, combining with it certain variants from the other texts, the Huzvarish readings being enclosed in square brackets after the Pazand forms: *Gunāvatō kūp pa* [*pavan*] *ham Pušt-i Vištāspānō ānōi* [*tam-*



WATER-TOWER WITH GABE, OR ZOROASTRIAN, RUINS IN THE BACKGROUND
(See p. 237)

on the precise localization of the Fire of Burzin would be natural to place at the ruin-crowned hereafter, five miles north of the village of Mihr Yet, owing to a slight obscurity in the Pahlavi translated, we cannot be exactly sure from what the parasangs towards the west' were reckoned; Schindler, starting from the Gunabad region, is suggest the village of Burzinan, near the north- of the Nishapur province.¹

compare the mountain and-i Rustam, 'Curtain rem),' near Gunabad, and later in company (see p. 299, below). confounded with the at Gird-Kuh, north of 4, n. 3). It is, however, the mountain in the cento-data (Yt. 19. 6), name, and the same Spand-dat, situated in or district (Var), of 2, 23). The identi- general section of the Ridge of Vishtasp is clear by the fact that Sovbar, of the Zoroas- ated on Mount Kon- mountain is mentioned Mount Spand-dat in the 12, 24, cf. Bd. 7. 14; 22; and cf. Yt. 19. as the shrunken sheet of an-i Sabz, in the Nisha- according to Houtum- 7. 29. 313) and Sykes 37. 3); compare like- with certain differences) 3. 16, and Stackelberg, geschichte, WZKM. 12. also, on Chashmah-i ge, pp. 386-387; Yata, 353. The additional

evidence given by the village Guna- bad, across the Binalud Kuh, north- east of Nishapur, has already been referred to.

¹ See Houtum-Schindler, *Academy*, 39. 312-313. It is appropriate to present both sides of the question more in detail, at the same time drawing attention to the slight uncertainty in regard to the accuracy of the text and of the correct understanding of the passage in its connection. Nine para- sanga, or farsakhs, would be a distance of about thirty-six miles, if we are to use as a standard the Khurasan farsakhs, which are notoriously long (see Cur- zon, 1. 245, n. 1). In the manuscripts (with the exception of the Iran. Bd., which uses the figure for '9') the number 'nine' is spelled out in full, *nūw* [= *šakgā*], though an error in the archetype codex may not be wholly excluded. But from what point are we to reckon 'nine parasangs toward the west' in the connection in which it stands? It would seem natural to say from some point in the Gunavat territory; and this is what led Houtum-Schindler to suggest the village of Burzinan as a possibility, a suggestion which might be more easy to accept if we point to the fact that at least two of the Bundahishn manuscripts have not the word Rivand directly before

associated with the little village of Rivad or Rivand, near Mihr, as explained in the footnotes below. Mount Gunavat, or Ganavat, of the Bundahishn, also a part of the ridge of Vishtasp, is to be identified with the group of mountains north and north-east of Nishapur, which likewise forms a portion of the Binalud Kuh, and which has its name preserved in the present village of Gunabad, in the district of Tus, a considerable distance to the northeast of Nishapur (see p. 297, below).¹ Uncertainty

may add that at Rivand, near Nishapur, in the fifth century A.D. (on July 31, 454), a number of Armenian Christian priests, who had been taken prisoners in the war with Vartan, suffered martyrdom under Yazdagard II (see Justi, in *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 529-530). The name Rivand recalls that of the little village of Rivad at the mountain's base not far from the village of Mihr. It is spelled Rivad or Reivat on the maps, and in Nasir ad-Din's *Diary*, p. 121; but Clerk (1861), *JRGS.* 31. 43, twice spells its name as 'Rehwund,' and it is given as Rivand by my friend Major Sykes (*Geog. Journ.* 37. 152 and map), who visited it in 1908, a year after my own visit to the place. While there, I tested the natives about the name, but received regularly Rivad or Ribat, though with hesitancy (probably due to repeated inquiry) they did give Riband; and they added that Riba(n)d was the name of the entire flank of the mountain east of Mount Mihr. On this apparent variation we must call attention to the sharp distinction drawn between Rivad and Rivand by Yakut (1220 A.D.) — see Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 272. Nevertheless, Firdausi gives Ribad (or Raibad) as the name of the mountain which the Iranians held in an earlier war against the Turanians who had seized Mount Gunabad (spelled

Kunabad) — see Mohl, *Livre des rois*, 3. 337, 346, 380, 391, 392, and compare the next note.

¹ Mount Gunavat, or Ganavat, of the Bundahishn (Bd. 12. 29, 34; 19. 8), and the Kunabad of the Shah Namah, is the same as the mountain Gunabad (see preceding note for references) which was seized by the Turanians in the earlier war as a base of operations against the Iranians encamped on the mountain of Ribad or Raibad (supposed to be Mount Revand). According to the Shah Namah (tr. Mohl, 3. 347), a river separated the two strategic positions. This stream is apparently the Ab-i Shur, on which the town of Rivand seems to have lain, between the eastern end of the Jagatai range and the mountains of Nishapur. The presence of the river here, as contrasted with its absence at Rivad near Mihr, is particularly emphasized by Houtum-Schindler, *Academy*, 29. 313. Mount Gunavat, or Gunabad, is furthermore associated with the mountain-fastness of Gunbadan, where Isfandiar was confined (*Shāh Nāmāh*, tr. Mohl, 4. 354, 370, 456; Tha'alibi, tr. Zotenberg, *Histoire*, p. 280; and cf. Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 215); the original title of the prison has been conjectured to be Kanbandān-Diz, 'fortress where the women were shut up' (see Stackelberg, *ZDMG.* 54. 103-104), with which

remains only as to the precise localization of the Fire of Burzin Mitro, which it would be natural to place at the ruin-crowned site, described hereafter, five miles north of the village of Mihr on our road. Yet, owing to a slight obscurity in the Pahlavi text above translated, we cannot be exactly sure from what point the 'nine parasangs towards the west' were reckoned; and Houtum-Schindler, starting from the Gunabad region, is inclined to suggest the village of Burzinan, near the north-western limit of the Nishapur province.¹

again we might compare the mountain cavern of Pardah-i Rustam, 'Curtain of Rustam's (Harem),' near Gunabad, which we visited later in company with Major Sykes (see p. 299, below). It is not to be confounded with the Diz Gumbadan, at Gird-Kuh, north of Damghan (p. 172, n. 8). It is, however, identical with the mountain in the Avesta called Spento-data (Yt. 19. 6), after the hero's name, and the same as the Pahlavi Spand-dat, situated in the 'enclosure,' or district (Var), of Revand (Bd. 12. 2, 23). The identification of this general section of the long and broken Ridge of Vishtasp is made still more clear by the fact that Lake Sovar, or Sovbar, of the Zoroastrian texts, situated on Mount Kondrasp, which mountain is mentioned directly after Mount Spand-dat in the Bundahishn (Bd. 12. 24, cf. Bd. 7. 14; 22. 1, 3; Zsp. 6. 22; and cf. Yt. 19. 6), is the same as the shrunken sheet of water Chashmah-i Sabz, in the Nishapur Mountains, according to Houtum-Schindler (*Acad.* 29. 818) and Sykes (*Geog. Journ.* 37. 3); compare likewise (though with certain differences) Justi, *Beiträge*, 2. 16, and Stackelberg, *Persische Sagengeschichte*, WZKM. 12. 239-240; see also, on Chashmah-i Sabz, Le Strange, pp. 386-387; Yate, *Khurasan*, p. 353. The additional

evidence given by the village Gunabad, across the Binalud Kuh, north-east of Nishapur, has already been referred to.

¹ See Houtum-Schindler, *Academy*, 29. 812-818. It is appropriate to present both sides of the question more in detail, at the same time drawing attention to the slight uncertainty in regard to the accuracy of the text and of the correct understanding of the passage in its connection. Nine parasangs, or farsakhs, would be a distance of about thirty-six miles, if we are to use as a standard the Khurasan farsakhs, which are notoriously long (see Curzon, 1. 245, n. 1). In the manuscripts (with the exception of the Iran. Bd., which uses the figure for '9') the number 'nine' is spelled out in full, *nāv* [= *fīshgā*], though an error in the archetype codex may not be wholly excluded. But from what point are we to reckon 'nine parasangs toward the west' in the connection in which it stands? It would seem natural to say from some point in the Gunavat territory; and this is what led Houtum-Schindler to suggest the village of Burzinan as a possibility, a suggestion which might be more easy to accept if we point to the fact that at least two of the Bundahishn manuscripts have not the word Rivand directly before

We reached the village of Mihr shortly before sunset, and made this our resting-place for the night;¹ but I slept an impatient sleep, eager to start by daylight for our visit to Mount Mihr, about five miles to the north. The horses were duly saddled; our guide rode a fine white donkey; and we started betimes over the rough and stony road to the mountains.

Kuh-i Mihr lies in the midst of a group of rugged mountains which surround it on every side. A characteristic feature in their composition is a conglomerate mixture of a reddish sandstone and clay, mingled with stony rubble. The crest of Mount Mihr looks like a volcanic plug, thrust up from the shoulders of the hill, and the whole rises to an elevation of four or five

the phrase introducing the Burzin Mitro Fire. If, on the other hand, as I have done in my translation, we accept the fuller text of the Iranian Bundahishn, we must allow for the presence of the word Rivand (which, by the way, has no appellation before it to determine whether the mountain or a town be intended). Therefore, in the second place, if the settlement or district of Rivand (northwest of Nishapur on the Isfarain road, as already explained) be the point chosen, then the location might fall considerably farther west. But there still remains the alluring possibility that in the present village of Rivad, or Rivand, and Mount Mihr we have actual survivals of the sites referred to. The entire distance, however, between Rivad-Rivand and the ruins on Mount Mihr is not over fifteen or twenty miles, though we might be inclined to argue that the nine farsakhs were short ones ('wohl kleine,' cf. Justi, *Beiträge*, 2. 16). This attractive possibility seemed to me almost an assurance of the identity of the two when I visited the places in May, 1907. Major Sykes, with whom I stayed at

Mashad a fortnight later, visited the ruins at Mount Mihr the next year (Nov., 1908), and in his *Sixth Journey* (*Geog. Journ.* 37. 151-152) definitely calls Mihr 'the site of the third sacred fire, known as *Atur Burzhin Mitro*, or "the Fire of the Labouring Classes,"' as I had maintained. If this be so, the photographs in my present chapter have a special value to any one interested in the history of Zoroastrianism; on the other hand, I do not hesitate to emphasize the fact that there are difficulties which another visit might perhaps help to solve. It must not be overlooked, for example, that Hoffmann (*Auszüge*, pp. 290-291) and Tomaschek (*Zur hist. Topog. Pers.* 1. 272), like Houtum-Schindler (cited above), are inclined to locate the Burzin Mihr Fire in the district of Rivand north west of Nishapur.

¹ Fraser, pp. 378-379, in 1822 called Mihr 'a poor village of forty or fifty houses'; but speaks of the industry in cotton-stuffs and in mulberries. Euan Smith (in Goldsmid, *Eastern Persia*, 1. 375), in 1871, mentions 'sixty families' there, but suffering from famine. The place seems since to have grown.

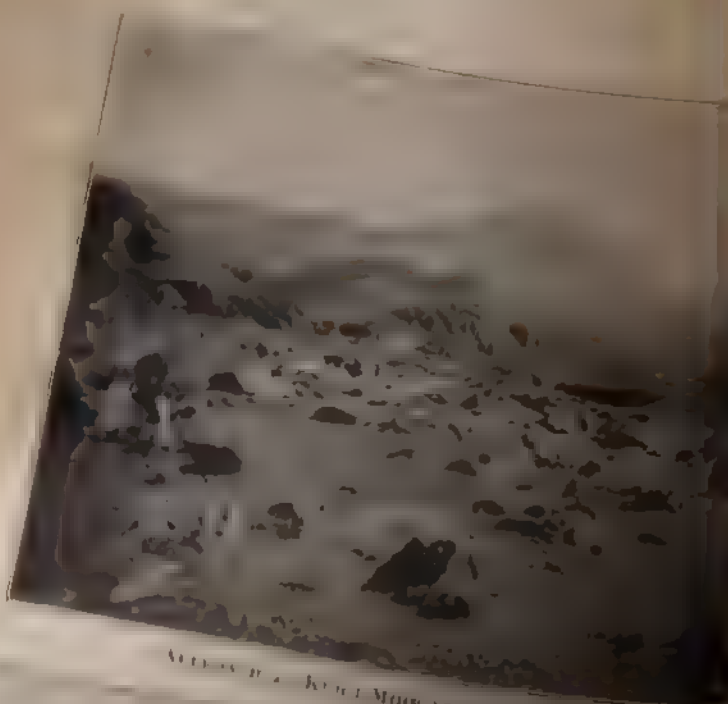


OUR GUIDE TO MOUNT MINE

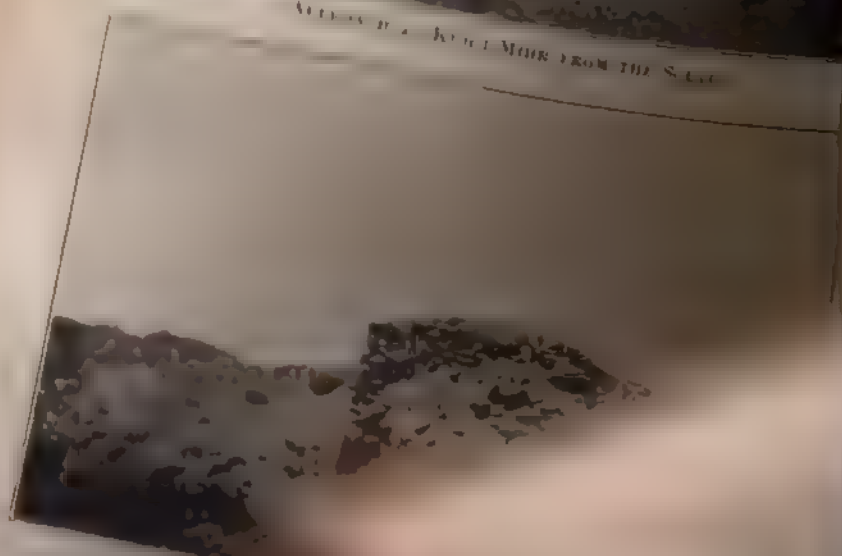


THE CREST OF MOUNT MINE

W
F
1



VIEW OF A MOOR FROM THE S.E.



W. F. 1

hundred feet above the stream (Ab-i Mihr) which pushes its way in and out among the bases of the mountains. The ascent of the height, steep at the best, was found easiest on the western side, and along the rude trail were seen fragments of pottery, though none were decorated or showed any markings that might allow any deduction as to their age. The top of the mountain was found to be of an elongated form, roughly resembling a pear; the general direction of its axis was north and south, and the surface of the ground was everywhere strewn with stones. The sole remaining portion of the building which crowned the northeast corner of the summit was a wall, or parapet, overhanging a precipitous declivity. The structure was of stones, a foot or a foot and a half each in dimensions, taken from the valley and the river below, and set without being specially dressed. Masses of them had fallen with a fragment of the crest that had broken off and slid down the hillside. The point at the extreme north of the summit was a slight projection, somewhat lower, but not particularly marked. At the northwest corner of the elevation there were traces of stones again, and at the southwest edge remnants of a sort of parapet, while the southern side, steep and sheer, was without any added structure.

Herodotus (1.131) says that the Persians erected their altars on the topmost hills, and the present site would certainly have been an ideal one to choose. As already indicated in the text and in the footnotes, I have a certain amount of hesitation in assuming that the ruin on Mount Mihr, just described, actually marks the site of the Burzin Mihr Fire, the fire most sacred in the eyes of the laboring classes, and the third of the three most famous Zoroastrian pyraea.¹ Nevertheless, I do believe that on this spot in early times there must have stood a famous sanctuary, at least a Dar-i Mihr, or 'Shrine of Mithra,' which has perpetuated its name in the hill and in the neighboring village of Mihr on the highroad. The photographs which we took have,

¹ On these three fires see Jackson, *Zoroaster*, pp. 98-100, 222.

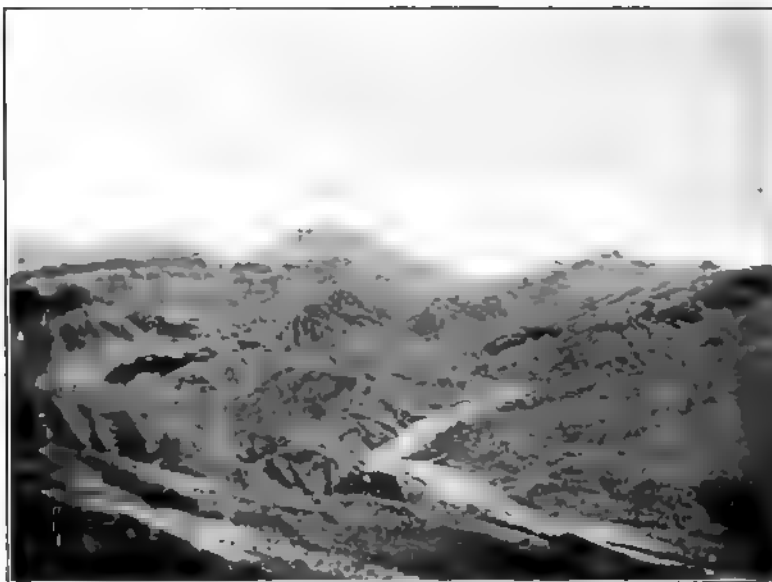
therefore, an interest for everyone who is interested in Zoroastrianism; and as I looked at the ruins, I thought of Tom Moore's well-known lines on the fortunes of the faith of ancient Iran:—

‘Her towers, where Mithra once had burn’d.’

The scene before us was full of impressiveness, and I could imagine the white-robed Magians standing on the summit to chant their hymns of praise to the rising sun, which by this time had ascended high in the heavens and was warning us to return and resume our journey.

On reaching the village of Mihr again, with its shady trees and busy stream, I could not help thinking how the lazy ease of the peasants loitering around must have contrasted with the activity and zeal of the laborers in Zoroaster's day, who helped to make famous the Fire of Burzin Mihr, which was certainly in this region, if not precisely here, and which was especially consecrated to their work.¹ Still, these simple people who were gathered around us had time to talk with us about the territory where their humdrum life was passed, and to tell us tales of the hills. There was, of course, a story of a Demon's House (*Khānah-i Dīv*) hidden somewhere back in the mountains; and those who were best informed on local topography spoke of ‘Gabr’ ruins in the region round about, using the term commonly employed to designate the old Zoroastrians as unbelievers. Only one of the company, however, a priest, seemed to have any idea of what was conveyed by the name of Zoroaster (in Persian, *Zardusht*), and he vaguely associated the name in some way with Minuchihr in Firdausi's *Shāh Nāmah*, though he frankly confessed that he did not know whether *Zardusht* was a king or what. On the other hand, as might be expected from their residing in a region where so many of the scenes were laid, several knew in a general way about Zal and Rustam, the legendary heroes in the *Shāh Nāmah*, though none could recite verses from the famous epic.

¹ See my *Zoroaster*, p. 99.



VIEW NORTHWARD FROM THE HEIGHT OF MIHR



RETURNING TO THE VILLAGE OF MIHR
(With the broken row of hills in the middle of the plain to the south)

The afternoon was wearing on, so we bade adieu to the assembled crowd, and resumed our eastward march, halting an hour at Rivad (or Rivand) on the left and then leaving Mount Kumish behind on the right across the plain.¹ A lark soaring high in the heavens called away our thoughts from the channel in which they had been running, but we pursued our journey with the assurance that, during the two days just past, we had been traversing historic ground and had located, so far as tradition can be followed, certain sites and scenes connected with one of the greatest battles in the holy Zoroastrian wars between Turan and Iran.

¹ Nasir ad-Din Shah, *Diary*, p. 121, wrote, 'Ribad is a thousand paces from the road, with thirty or forty families; it has a good caravansarai and an old reservoir.' Clerk (*JRGS.* 31. 43) similarly remarks, 'the road passes

the fine serai of Rehwund, standing entirely by itself; the village is some distance to the left.' Euan Smith (in Goldsmid, *Eastern Persia*, 1. 374) merely notes 'we reached Rivad, twenty miles from Sabzawár.'

CHAPTER XVI

ON THE ROAD TO NISHAPUR

‘And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then.’

—TAKHTYSH, *Locksley Hall*, 115.

ONLY a day's journey now separated us from Nishapur, the home of Omar Khayyam, and my heart bounded faster than the speed of the hurrying horses that were carrying us towards our goal, though there were points of interest to halt at on the way, and the changes of relays gave opportunities for study as well as for rest.

The first feature to command attention on the hill-bordered plain, which was treeless, but rich and green with cultivation, was found two hours east of our former station, or about four miles this side of the city of Sabzavar, at a short distance north of the highway, in the midst of a well-sown field of grain. It was the handsome Minar (or minaret) of Khusrugird, standing as a lonely monument of a vanished town that once occupied a considerable area and whose name still lives in the simple village of Khusrugird, a mile farther north, with its ancient fortress and traces of long-abandoned settlements in the environs.¹

This striking column, about a hundred and twenty feet high, closely resembles those already described at Damghan and Semnan:² and, like them, it might serve our builders in the West as an artistic model of construction in brick. Every detail of the graceful shaft, whose top, however, is somewhat

¹ On the subject of the old fort at the village of Khusrugird and the traces of former habitations in the vicinity of the minaret itself, see Fraser, p. 381; Ferrier, p. 104; and especially Tate, *Khorasan*, p. 388.

Tate describes this citadel as ‘an old hexagonal fort on an artificial mound, about eighty yards in diameter, with high thick walls, surrounded by an outer wall and ditch.’

² See above, pp. 148, 167–168.



THE MINARET OF KHUSRUQIRD

damaged, came out in the brilliant light of the afternoon sun; and it was easy to imagine what must have been the pride felt by its founder and its designer on the day when it was finished. Four great cylinders, with the usual dividing zones of ornamental brickwork patterns, compose the shaft; and on the two lower and the uppermost of these drums, the diagonal or raised diamond design prevails. Two of the girdling zones are adorned by Kufic inscriptions that assign the monument to the year 505 A.H. = 1111 A.D., when Sanjar, who afterwards became famous as sultan of the Oxus region, was governor of Khurasan,¹ thus showing that the minaret belongs to the middle period of Seljuk architecture, although the name of its builder is not given.

The base from which the monument rises is a concrete pedestal of cement and gravel about eleven feet square,² and this plinth, in turn, rises from a large platform, ten feet high and forty feet square, which is said to owe its existence to repairs ordered by Nasir ad-Din Shah, when on his pilgrimage to Mashad in 1866.³ The surface of the platform is tastefully paved with square bricks, and is adorned about the edges with a decorative studding of rounded brick knobs, while a dozen or more low pillars surround it. On the eastern and western sides are steps for mounting the terrace, and under it runs a passageway that is entered by doors at the four corners. Means of ascent to the minaret were provided by a flight of spiral stairs inside; but they are now in a ruinous condition, so that I could grope only part way up in the dark, although Fraser, in 1822, managed with difficulty to reach the top, and O'Donovan repeated the performance in 1880.⁴ Effect is added to the

¹ On the date see Khanikoff, *Mémoire*, pp. 87-88, and Curzon, 1. 270. For Sultan Sanjar's career see Skrine and Ross, *Heart of Asia*, pp. 134-141, London, 1899.

² Compare also Bassett, p. 212, and O'Donovan, 1. 428.

³ See Yate, pp. 398-399. Nasir ad-Din, *Diary*, p. 126, mentions the minaret as 'high, old, and beautiful.'

⁴ See Fraser, p. 380; O'Donovan, 1. 429.

monument by the rough but pretty garden which surrounds it, and which is enclosed by a low mud wall. The mosque to which the minaret once belonged has long since disappeared, — a loss caused, it is believed, by the ravages of war, which also leveled the dwellings around it, if we may judge from the vestiges found here and there in the vicinity. The absence of these structures is partly replaced today by fields of waving barley, so that the city has not vanished without leaving a smile behind.

The consensus of opinion on the part of those best qualified to judge is that the Minar of Khusrugird (1111 A.D.) and the vestiges of the past that remain near its vicinity, together with the neighboring fortified village of Khusrugird, once formed part of an old settlement that belonged to Sabzavar, which had supplanted it.¹ The general devastation was brought about by the inroads of the Ghuzz Turks, followed by the despoliation wrought by the Khvarazm Shahs, or invading kings of Khiva, and by later wars and disturbances. Thus we know that in 1160 the fortress of Khusrugird was stormed by the pillaging army of Mu'ayyad, who had taken Nishapur, and especially that Muhammad Shah, of Khvarazm, a half century later, laid waste the entire country.² In spite of that, Yakut still mentions Khusrugird about 1216 A.D., though as occupying a position inferior to Sabzavar, so that its decadence must already have begun.³

With regard to its earlier history, we may say that for three centuries prior to its downfall we find regular mentions of Khusrugird, as a place of note, in the itineraries of the Arab-

¹ So Fraser, p. 380; followed by Curzon, 1. 269. Schefer, *Chrestomathie persane*, 2. 190, Paris, 1885, also states that Khusrugird was the chief place prior to the succession of Sabzavar.

² On the siege of the fortress of Khusrugird by Mu'ayyad, beginning 14th of I Rabi', 555 A.H. = March 24,

1160 A.D., see Defrémery, *Recherches sur trois princes de Nichabour*, in *Journal asiatique*, 4^{me} sér. 8 (1846), p. 460. For the invasion of Khurasan by Muhammad Shah, of Khvarazm, see Fraser, pp. 380–381; Skrine and Ross, *Heart of Asia*, pp. 142, 145, 147.

³ Yakut, tr. Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 208.

Persian geographers;¹ and its Sasanian origin appears to be borne out by the fact that Khusrugird is believed to be one of the five cities founded by Khusrau I (Anushirvan the Just, 531–579 A.D.), according to the Pahlavi treatise, 'Cities of Iran.'² A still more ancient date, doubtless due to a confusion between the two names of the possible founders, is assigned by a local view, which attributes the beginning of the town to the legendary Kai Khusrau, about 800 B.C.; but this is going back almost into the realm of myth.³

Cultivated acres on the right and billowy grain-fields on the left formed the half-hour approach to Sabzavar, 'the Verdure-bearing,' as its name signifies; and the green effect of its environs was heightened by gardens, even though the town itself is dry and dusty, despite an abundance of water supplied by streams. The city lies in a broad plain, girt on either side by distant mountains. Rectangular in form, it is enclosed by a wall of mud and sun-dried bricks, with a ditch at its base, and extends about a mile in one direction and half that distance in the other. On the northern side of the town the Ark, or citadel, is conspicuous, raised upon an artificial mound, and occupying a site that is certainly very old.⁴ A moment later we were passing beneath a heavy white gateway, which forms the west-

¹ These references will be found in the edition of the Arab geographers by De Goeje, and are (so far as noted) as follows: Ibn Khurdadhbah (864 A.D.), 6. 23; Kudamah (880 A.D.), 6. 201 (155); Ibn Rustah (903 A.D.), 7. 171, who speaks of 'the town of Khusrugird, which is a town of Baihak'; Istakhri (951 A.D.), 1. 257, 284; Ibn Haukal (978 A.D.), 2. 313, 333 (tr. Ouseley, *Oriental Geography*, pp. 215, 223); Mukaddasi (985 A.D.), 3. 50, 300 note, 318 (Sabzavar and Khusrugird), 341, 488 (cf. Sprenger, *Post-routen*, p. 14); Idrisi (1154 A.D.), tr. Jaubert, *Géographie d'Édrisi*, 2. 177,

184, Paris, 1840 (but the name is misread in Arabic by Jaubert as 'Djeser Wadjerd').

² See *Shatrûihā-i Airān*, § 19 (tr. Modi, pp. 71, 147, 148; § 20, tr. Blochet, pp. 166, 168, 173—in the editions named above, p. 162, n. 2).

³ The assignment to Kai Khusrau is mentioned by Defrémery, *op. cit.* (*Journal asiatique*, 1846, p. 460).

⁴ The citadel that is now standing appears to have been built, or rebuilt, some time after 1335, as it is said to be due to the Sarbadarians; see Yate, p. 397.

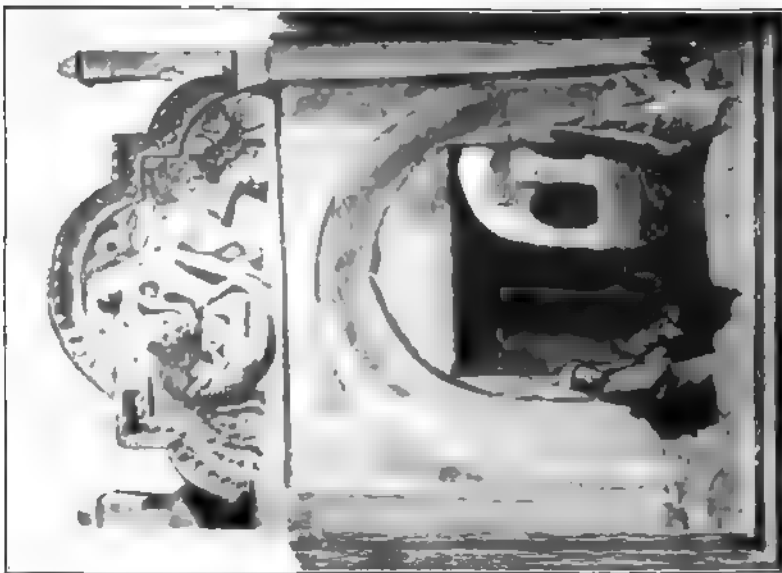
an entrance through the city walls, and entered a narrow, crowded street, close to whose beginning the post-station stands.

On alighting we were immediately met by a young Persian, who spoke French quite well, and who handed us two telegrams from English friends at Mashad, extending us a hearty welcome there. This greeting brought us again into touch with the West, after so many days 'on the road,' and was a veritable delight, so we started at once to find the office, which was in charge of Persian operators, in order to wire an answer.

To reach the telegraph headquarters it was necessary to traverse almost the entire length of the town, threading our way through the main street, which was lined by the booths of the bazar and roofed over. It was narrow, and jammed with people; buyers, sellers, and beggars seemed to be hopelessly jumbled together; and the familiar warning cry, *Khabardār! Khabardār!* to force the crowd to make room to pass, was incessant. All this gave an idea that Sabzavar, with its ten or fifteen thousand inhabitants, is a place of considerable commercial activity, and it is certainly true that business has greatly revived in recent years; yet, on the whole, the impression was not altogether a favorable one, although European enterprise, especially Russian, is finding its way into the city, particularly as it is the capital of the district. Cotton and fruits are exported abroad, as well as shipped for consumption in the region round about, and our young guide spoke with manifest pride of the establishment of a cotton manufactory shortly before our visit.¹

¹ The different estimates and various opinions regarding Sabzavar in the past hundred years are not uninteresting. Truilhier (1807), p. 257, said that the bazar was 'miserable,' but the number of houses was stated at 600, although more likely 1000. Fraser (1822), p. 380, 'bazar is miserable,' but prices 'reasonable'; number of houses said to be 1000, more

likely 500, doubtful if more than 2000 inhabitants; but eleven years later (1833) the same traveler (*Winter's Journey*, 2. 193) found the town 'increased in prosperity and population.' Conolly (1830), 1. 249, 'rated at 40-000 souls,' but more likely 'a tenth of that number.' Ferrier (1845), p. 101, favorable impression of the town as 'full of life'; about 12,000 inhabitants.



A GATE IN THE WALLS OF SAREZAYAR



ROSTAM SLAYING THE WHITE DEMON, DIV-I SAFID

The only buildings of which Sabzavar can make any real boast are a couple of large madrasahs, or Moslem academies — one of them certainly old — and two good-sized mosques. The chief mosque is said to go back to the time of the Sarbadari dynasty of Sabzavar, in the fourteenth century, although its date is not absolutely fixed. It contains, however, two inscribed tablets of a later date, one from the year 1571 A.D., with an order of Shah Tahmasp I, granting the people immunity from certain taxes; and the other, dated 1723, recording a firman of Shah Tahmasp II, relieving the city from the obligation of bestowing gifts upon visiting governors, for the reason that it had been greatly depleted by Turkoman raids and by the Afghan inroads two years before.¹

While we were wandering about the city, I had in mind an old tradition, recorded by Ahmad Razi in the sixteenth century A.D., and locating at Sabzavar the scene of the combat, three thousand years ago, between Rustam and the Div-i Safid, or 'White Demon,' which resulted in a victory for the Persian hero, who slew the monster and thus accomplished the last of his seven labors. According to Ahmad, the scene of the engagement was wont to be pointed out in the middle of the city, and was called the *Maidān-i Div-i Safīd*, 'Campus of the White Demon.'² There are several small maidans, or squares, within

Houtum-Schindler (1876-1877), p. 224, about 2000 families. Bassett (1878), p. 213, 'cannot be more than 10,000 inhabitants,' though estimated higher. Valuable, though given a generation ago, are the statistics of the accurate Houtum-Schindler, p. 224, who recorded Sabzavar as having 11 town-quarters, 4 gates, 9 large baths, 2 large mosques and 30 smaller ones, 3 large watercourses and 3 small, 2 madrasahs, or large schools, 7 caravansarais, 460 shops (besides 90 which were empty), and 2000 families. Yate (1897), pp. 396, 398, gives 12 caravansarais and 750 shops.

¹ See Yate, p. 398. It may be added that Fraser, p. 392, mentions the fact that the oldest madrasah bears an Arabic inscription in colored tiles over the gate, naming Fakr ad-Din as the builder, but giving no date; he furthermore mentions 'part of an old minar like that of Khosroughird.' Khanikoff, p. 88, also alludes to this dilapidated column, on which he saw traces of Kufic characters; but if it is still in existence, we missed seeing it.

² So Amin Ahmad-i Razi in the *Haft Iklim*, or 'Seven Climes,' written in 1593-1594, as quoted by Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 299, n. 1.

the limits of the city, but none that might have served for that struggle in the legendary past; and it may be for this reason that the allusion to the maidan has been thought to refer to the general plain that surrounds Sabzavar.¹ By way of comment on this legend, it may be worth while to add that Firdausi's version of the combat places the lair of the White Div in a mountain cavern (*ghār*) from which he is summoned forth by Rustam to the fray.² The townsfolk of Sabzavar, with whom I spoke on the subject, had some idea of the story of the Div-i Safid from the *Shāh Nāmāh*, but seemed to have no special information to give. At all events, the tradition, with its claims, tends to show how great is the antiquity that is ascribed to the city.

A more moderate legend, though bold enough, is content to allow that the town came into existence at a later date through Sasan, who was, according to Firdausi and others, the son of the Bahman above mentioned, and who was, at any rate, the reputed ancestor of the House of Sasan, or Sasanian dynasty.³ In other words, this legend would concede that Sabzavar was in existence at the beginning of the Sasanian era, or as early as

According to Ahmad, 'on montrait encore au milieu de la ville l'endroit où eut lieu le combat de Roustam et de Sohrab; il portait le nom de *Meï-dān du Div blanc*.' This implies also that the fateful combat of the hero with his own son Sohrab likewise took place on this spot. For the date of Ahmad Razi, see Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 2. 218. References to Firdausi's version of the story of the White Div will be found in a note below. It may be barely possible that the basis of the White Demon myth was a victory by Iran in the primitive ages over pioneer members of the white race that had invaded Persia from the north, but were driven back by Rustam's prowess.

¹ The idea that the reference is to the plain is given by Ritter, *Erdkunde*, 8. 331, who refers to an article by von Hammer, *Über die Geographie Persiens*, in *Wien. Jahrbuch*, 7. 295, Vienna, 1819; so also Spiegel, *Erānische Alterthumskunde*, 1. 57, Leipzig, 1871.

² Firdausi, *Shāh Nāmāh*, ed. Vullers-Landauer, 1. 352, tr. Mohl, 1. 424, and tr. Warner, 2. 59-62. The mountains are there called Haft Kuh, 'Seven Mountains,' but are difficult to locate because of the generality of the name.

³ See Fraser, p. 380; and, for the descendants of Sasan, see Justi, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 514, and the same scholar's *Iranisches Namenbuch*, pp. 419-422, Marburg, 1895.

the third century A.D. No mention of the city appears to be made in the Pahlavi texts of Sasanian times, but it is found somewhat later in the medieval Oriental geographers, thus proving its importance before the tenth century A.D. Ibn Rustah (903 A.D.) speaks of Sabzavar as 'a fine city,' and Istakhri (951) mentions it in an itinerary of the stages between Khusrugird and Nishapur, while Mustaufi (1340) calls it 'a middling-sized city, the chief place of the district of Baihak, with a temperate climate and a fertile soil that produces cereals and several kinds of fruits.'¹ As a matter of fact, little is really known about the history of the town before the eleventh and twelfth centuries, or the period of the Seljuks, when it shared in the same fortunes that were mentioned above as befalling Khusrugird through the ravages of the Ghuzz Turks and the incursions of the shahs of Khvarazm and other invaders.² All the towns in this district had plenty of fellow-sufferers to share in their misfortunes; but the inhabitants of Sabzavar were brave enough to throw off for a time, in the fourteenth century, the yoke of foreign lords. Two valiant leaders, the brothers Hasan Hamsa and Husain Hamsa, then arose and, 'staking their heads' against an oppressor's demand, founded a short-lived dynasty, popularly supposed to have been called the Sarbadarians from their proud answer, 'We stake our heads' (*sar ba-dārīm*).³ This line of twelve kings held sway in rapid succession at Sabzavar for forty-five years (1336-1381), but succumbed to the great conqueror Timur Lang (Tamerlane)

¹ Ibn Rustah, 7. 171; Istakhri, 1. 284; and Hamd-Allah Mustaufi, *Nuzhat al-Kulūb*, cited by Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 299.

² See Defrémery, *op. cit.* p. 455, for the determination with which the inhabitants of Sabzavar held out successfully against a siege by the Ghuzzes in 544 A.H. = 1159 A.D. Furthermore, see Fraser, p. 381, n. 1, for a story that shows the intense

hatred which Muhammad Shah, of Khvarazm, who was a fanatical Sunni, showed against the inhabitants of Sabzavar, who were strong Shiites, or devoted followers of Ali.

³ See Howorth, *History of the Mongols*, 3. 727, London, 1888; further literature is given by Horn, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 576, who has (on p. 575) a somewhat different explanation of the name.

when he devastated Iran. The worst ruin to the city, however, appears to have been wrought by the invasion of the Afghans, in 1721, who held the town till it was retaken somewhat later by the famous Nadir Shah.¹ This monarch seems to have undertaken a partial restoration of the place; but its rehabilitation, at the opening of the nineteenth century, was due to Ali Yah Khan of Mazinan.²

This brief sketch would be incomplete, however, without at least touching upon certain literary associations connected with the city, and certain religious aspects of its history. Sabzavar was the birthplace of a number of minor men of letters; but real renown belongs to Husain Va'iz, the author of the *Anvār-i Suhaili*, a Persian version of the great book of fables popularly attributed to Aesop, but probably of Indian origin, and translated into various languages till it came to us as the delight of our childhood days. This clever versionist, who was a devout Shiite in religion, died here in 1504 or 1505.³ With regard to their Moslem faith, the people of Sabzavar have been even more enthusiastic Shiites, or followers of Ali, than most of the Persians. For this reason it seems that the invaders, who were fanatical Sunnis, or traditionalists, have been all the more rabid against them;⁴ but it is interesting to note that Babism has taken a strong hold in this center in modern times, which shows the characteristic Persian tendency towards revolt against strictly orthodox Muhammadanism.⁵

The sun had set when we returned to the post-house, and the

¹ Fraser, p. 381; Ferrier, p. 101.

² Fraser, p. 381; Yate, p. 397.

³ Cf. Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 300, where it is stated that Husain lost his life for his faith. For details about Husain Va'iz-i Kashi-fi's version, see Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 2. 350-353; Horn, *Gesch. d. pers. Litt.* pp. 313-322, Leipzig, 1901; Ethé, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 327-329.

⁴ Compare preceding note, and see above, p. 225, n. 2.

⁵ This is noted by Bassett, pp. 213-214. Some memoranda regarding the Bab are given in my *Persia*, pp. 48-50; and reference may now be made also to Browne's elaborate article on the sect in Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, 2. 299-308, Edinburgh, 1909.

moonlight was superb as we rested on the rooftop of our halting-place till a late hour. The horses were then made ready, but we had difficulty in reaching our seats in the carriage because of the raft of beggars gathered about. Some of them were lunatics, real or feigned, and added their incoherent babble to the Bedlam noise around. All were importunate in their demands for bakshish, pushing and crowding as they scrambled for the doles that were scattered to gratify them; but none were ever satisfied, and one narrowly escaped being crushed to death beneath our wheels as we dashed away, the rabble still following us with their cry for alms. No sooner were we passing out of the farther gate of the town, than a pack of savage curs took up the cry. 'Even the dogs of Sabzavar are howling beggars,' said our servant Agopian, now quite out of temper; and away we rumbled into the plain, which was aglow with a flood of the purest moonlight.

A halt for a fresh relay of horses was made during the night at a station near the old caravansarai of Zafarani, or Ribat Zafarani, 'the Saffron Guardhouse,' which was once the largest sarai in Persia. Its name, which means 'saffron,' from Arabic-Persian *za'farān*, is derived from a yellowish glint in the bricks of which it is constructed. There is current, however, a pretty legend which ascribes the effect to the circumstance that its builder used, instead of straw for his bricks, a load of saffron which he had generously purchased to relieve a poor man in a passing caravan; and, though meeting with reverses afterwards, he was ultimately rewarded a thousandfold by the man whom he had helped by his purchase and who later became enormously rich.¹

¹ Various versions of this folk-tale are found in Fraser, pp. 384-386; Ferrier, pp. 102-103; Eastwick, 2. 179-180. Some details regarding a mosque, with inscriptions, adjoining the old caravansarai will be found in Khanikoff, pp. 88-89. Five hundred

years ago Zafarani appears to have been a considerable place, as it is alluded to by Clavijo (p. 107, Hakluyt), on July 22, 1404, as 'a city called Zabrain; this city is very large, and contains fine houses and mosques; but most of them were deserted.'

Crossing an easy hill-pass, which wound its way among low ridges, we changed horses anew at the little village of Shur-ab, 'Brackish water,' and hastened forward again, cheered by the thought that there now remained only a single stage to be traversed before reaching our goal, Nishapur, the city of ancient fame and the home of Omar Khayyam.

CHAPTER XVII

NISHAPUR, THE HOME OF OMAR KHAYYAM

'Sultan and slave alike have gone their way
With Bahram Gur, but whither none may say,
Yet he who charmed the wise at Nishapur
Seven centuries since, still charms the wise to-day.'

—THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH, *On Omar Khayyam*.

THE sun had not yet risen to 'scatter the stars from the field of night' as we scurried along in our four-horsed vehicle on the final stage of our pilgrimage to the Home of Omar Khayyam.¹

Even though it was the last day of May, there was a sharp chill in the early morning air. A dull haze lingered on the horizon after 'the phantom of false dawn' — the *ṣubḥ-i kāṣib* — had died away, and it still partly shrouded the winding road that led upward over a pass across the hills before reaching ancient Nishapur.² Dawn broke as we reached the crest of

¹ This chapter, descriptive of our visit in May, 1907, was written in that year and was ready for publication Sept. 1, 1908, but was held back till now. Since that time my friend Major P. M. Sykes has visited Nishapur, in 1908, and published an interesting article entitled *A Pilgrimage to the Tomb of Omar Khayyam*, in the magazine *Travel and Exploration*, 2. 129-138, London, September, 1909. I am indebted to his courtesy and to that of Mr. Eustace Reynolds-Ball, editor of the magazine, for the kind permission to reproduce a picture of the approach to the Shrine of the Imam-zadah Mahruk and the view of

Kadamgah, both from photographs by Captain J. W. Watson.

² The allusion to the 'false dawn' (*ṣubḥ-i kāṣib*, or *durūgh*), as contrasted with the 'true dawn' (*ṣubḥ-i ṣādīq*, or *rāst*), is familiar to all acquainted with that phenomenon in the East. FitzGerald poetically renders the idea in his first edition (verse 2) by 'Dawn's Left Hand,' and more literally in the fourth edition (verse 2) by 'the phantom of false morning.' The references given in the notes below are to these editions (FG. 1, 4) unless otherwise designated. Throughout I have compared FitzGerald's versions with the Persian text of Omar

the topmost hill, and the great plain of Nishapur lay spread before our eyes. The 'inverted bowl' of the sky shone crystal clear,¹ save for a bank of fleecy clouds that served to soften the jagged edges of the blue hills as they rose behind the plain and formed a background to the city. The soft trill of the Persian nightingale, the bulbul, crying to the rose, fell plaintively on the ear;² and the twitter of a choir of birds awoke the morning air, as they had done perhaps in the 'Bird Parliament,' written by Omar's brother poet, Farid ad-Din Attar, with whose allegorical poem we are familiar also through Fitzgerald's abridgment.

The heavy rains — which had been unusually late for the season — had called forth a growth of 'tender green' here and there along the sandy waste.³ A distant mirage floated for an instant before our vision, only to be transformed a moment later into what we discovered to be a far-off patch of mud incrustated with salt that looked 'like snow upon the desert's dusty face.'⁴

Khayyam in the two manuscripts, one reproduced by Eben Francis Thompson, *Edward Fitzgerald's Rubā'iyāt of Omar Khayyam, with a Persian Text*, privately printed [Worcester, Mass.], 1907 (here abbreviated as Th.); the other, an edition by Edward Heron-Allen, *The Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayyam, a Facsimile of the MS. in the Bodleian Library, Translated and Edited*, 2 ed., Boston, 1898 (abbreviated as H-A.). Reference has also been made to the Persian text in Whinfield, *The Quatrains of Omar Khayyām*, London, 1883 (abbreviated as Wh.); to the commentary in Batson and Ross, *The Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayyam*, New York and London, 1900 (abbreviated as BR.); and also to a translation by E. F. Thompson, *The Quatrains of Omar Khayyam Translated from the Persian into English Verse*, privately printed [Worcester,

Mass.], 1896 (abbreviated as tr. Th.), as well as to the translation by John Payne, printed for the Villon Society, London, 1898 (abbreviated as P.).

¹ FG. 1 ed. 52, 4 ed. 72, cf. Th. 52, P. 706, H-A. 134, in *charkh chū tās-ist nigūn uftādah*, 'this wheel (of heaven) is like a bowl turned upside-down.'

² FG. 6, cf. Wh. 174, P. 294, Th. 6, H-A. 67, *bulbul ba-zabān-i Pahlavi bā gul-i zard/faryād hamī zanad kih mai bāyad khvard*, 'the nightingale calls in the Pahlavi tongue to the yellow rose to drink wine.'

³ FG. 1 ed. 19, 4 ed. 20, cf. P. 61, Wh. 62, Th. 19, lit. 'each green (tuft, *har sabzah*) that grows upon the margin of the stream, thou mightest say is grown from the lip of some angel-faced one.'

⁴ FG. 14 (16), cf. Th. 14, *chū dar ṣaḥrā barf*, 'like snow upon the desert.'

A brief halt was made at the post-station near a 'battered caravansarai'¹ resembling those that were known in the days of Omar, and then a fresh start was taken at a quickened pace, in order that we might reach the city before noon.

Pilgrims with the green banners of Islam thronged the road. Whether or not they represented one or other of 'the two-and-seventy jarring sects,'² they were certainly not on their way to free-thinking Omar's tomb, but had been on a pilgrimage to the hallowed shrine at Mashad, the holiest city in Persia, and were homeward-bound with the rich store of accumulated merit that was assured them by the tenets of their faith.

If questioned about Nishapur and its history, some of them, by the merest chance, might have told us stray snatches of the legendary tales of the town, while among a few there might linger the memory that the storms of the Tartar and Mongol invasions had swept over the city in the early thirteenth century, joining more than once with devastating earthquakes to shift the site of Nishapur, as explained hereafter. Surely all would know that the blue dome of the shrine yonder in the distance was raised over the sacred remains of the Imam-zadah Muhammad Mahruk, mentioned hereafter as a kinsman of the sainted Riza of Mashad and a pillar of the faith. Only a half dozen would know of Omar, and then as *Hakim Khayyām*, 'Doctor Khayyam,' the scientist and astronomer whose computations 'reduced the year to better reckoning'; they might possibly add that he was a philosopher and sage, but none would remember him as a poet.³ Omar, in fact, has not the qualities that appeal to Muhammadan orthodoxy in Persia. He was a Sunnite, whereas they belong to the Shiite sect; his very name recalls the hated Sunni caliph Omar and the Arab

¹ FG. 16 (17), P. 199, Wh. 70, Th. 16, in *kuhnaḥ ribāṭ*, 'this old fortified caravansarai.'

² FG. 43 (59), cf. Th. 43, H-A. 77, Wh. 194, *haftād u dū millat*, 'seventy and two sects.'

³ I recall the fact that one of the Grand Vizirs at Teheran, who knew English, said to me, 'Your famous version by FitzGerald is better than the original.'

conquest; and his wine-bibbing verses, except when given a strained mystical and allegorical interpretation by the Sufis, are taken literally; while his freedom of thought in expressing his attitude toward the One Eternal Being is looked upon as little less than blasphemy.

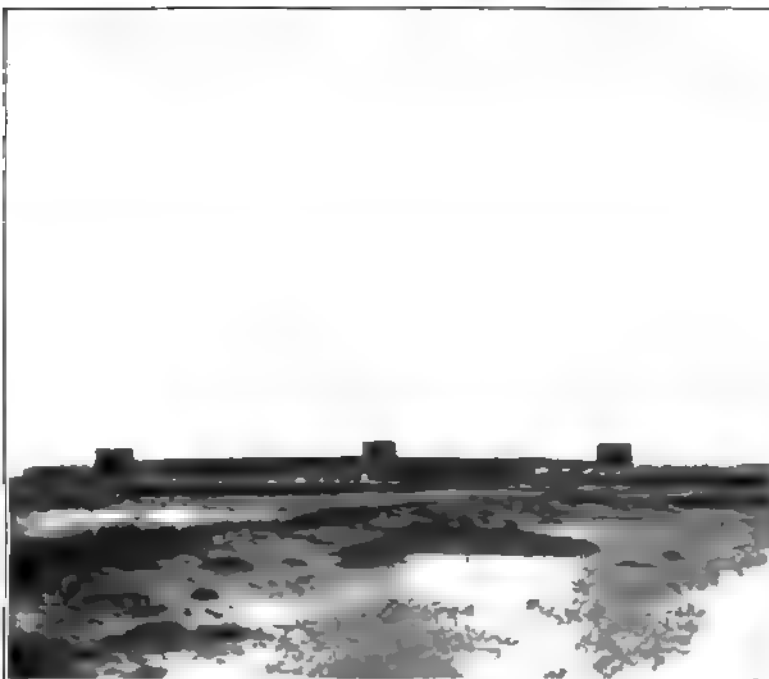
It was hardly surprising, therefore, that our driver had not the faintest idea of what was implied by the name Omar Khayyam; but he was not slow to make up for his lack of knowledge by inquiring of the next passer-by the direction of the road that would bring us to 'that noted Hakīm in whom the *farangīs* (foreigners) were interested.' He whipped up his four horses with a sharp slash, and away we started, only to find to our chagrin that the road led to the house of a Jewish quack doctor (*hakīm*, 'doctor, learned man,' having been understood in the sense of 'physician') to whom some Europeans had once gone for medical advice when passing through Nishapur! There was consequently nothing left to do but wheel about and drive hurriedly to the *chāpār-khānah*, or post-house.

The horses galloped along a wide lane that ran between fields of 'golden grain.'¹ To my memory kept recurring image after image from the FitzGerald version of the *Rubaiyat*, though whether 'old Fitz,' who was steeped also in the Persian poetry of Attar and Jami, derived these metaphors from Omar himself or adapted them from the latter Persian sources, is best known to those who have compared his version, quatrain by quatrain, with the text of the original *rubā'is*. 'The reviving herb whose tender green fedges the river-lip' is a truly Persian picture based ultimately on the original text, and was actually before our eyes, since nature smiles more gratefully in Persia than elsewhere when earth receives the smallest drop of water. Our journey of five hundred miles across Northern Iran had been for days along the edge of the great desert of the Lut, and time and again I had thought of FitzGerald's graphic lines about 'the strip of herbage strown, that just divides the desert from

¹ FG. 15 (15) seems to be wanting in the Persian.



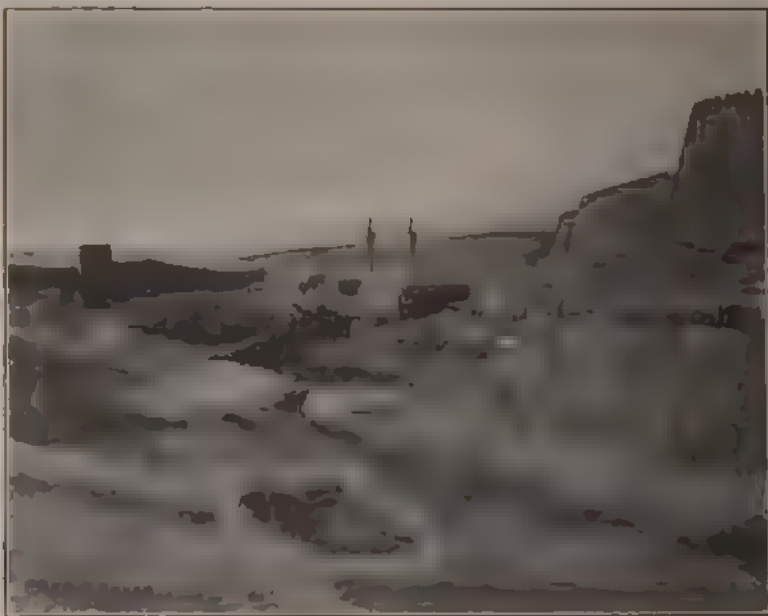
THE ROAD APPROACHING NISHAPUR



A CARAVANSARAI NEAR NISHAPUR



A WELL OUTSIDE THE CITY



THE WALLS OF NISHAPUR

the sown,' even if one would have to search long to find the exact phrase in the original.¹ We had already often tasted 'the well of life' amid 'annihilation's waste' — veritable realities — although both these and the 'phantom caravan' of the version appear to have been derived from a blurred conception of the Persian verse that means literally, 'the caravan of life is passing strangely by.'² At all events, the caravan had been an ever-passing actuality, so often had the approach of this slowly moving train been proclaimed in the silent night by the deep-donging bell that swung from the leading camels' necks. But the only 'distant drum' which I saw — not heard — as we neared Nishapur, was a huge tambour on the front of a post-wagon filled with ragged Persian soldiers. The head of the drum was broken, however, and I fancy that no 'brave music' or 'rumble' could have come from its gaping lips.³

A few minutes later we were driving beneath the low bastioned walls of Nishapur and were hurrying forward toward the bazar, Omar's 'market-place,' amid the idle crowds that gathered to gape and ask questions, as *farangis* come seldom to Nishapur. As pointed out in a chapter after this, the city has shifted its position somewhat with the lapse of ages, and its beauty, so extolled a thousand years ago, has departed forever; but its general aspect and the characteristics of its inhabitants

¹ FG. 10 (11); the nearest approach in the Persian is H-A. 32, *faṣl-i gul u ṣarāf jūbār u lab-i kisht*, 'in the time of the rose and on the side of a river and the edge (lit. lip) of the sown land.' Heron-Allen (*loc. cit.*) notes a somewhat remote parallel in Jami's *Baharistan*, 6.

² The original two Persian verses out of which FitzGerald has made a stanza of four verses (FG. 1 ed. 33 = 4 ed. 48) read in the manuscripts (Th. 38, H-A. 60, cf. Wh. 136), in *ḡāṣṣah-i 'amr* 'ajab mi-ḡaṣṣarad dariāb damī kuh bā ṣarāb mi-ḡaṣṣarad, 'This

caravan of life is strangely passing by; comprehend the moment that is joyously passing by.' Possibly FitzGerald mistook the word 'ajab, 'wondrously, strangely,' as 'ajb, one of the meanings of which is the termination of a sandy tract,' and of it 'annihilation's waste'.

³ FG. 1 ed. 33 = 4 ed. 48. The original Persian verse is 12, H-A. 60, cf. Wh. 136, in *ḡāṣṣah-i 'amr* 'ajab mi-ḡaṣṣarad dariāb damī kuh bā ṣarāb mi-ḡaṣṣarad, 'This

have undoubtedly remained much the same as they were in the poet's time, so that the main features here described would be equally applicable to the Nishapur of his own day.

The town is built in the form of a quadrilateral; and its walls, strengthened by fifty-eight bastions, enclose a circuit of over two miles and are entered by four gates, one on each side. The quarters into which the city is divided are four in number, and are provided with moderate caravansarai accommodations and several public baths.¹ The bazars of the city are limited in extent, yet are said to contain some four hundred and fifty shops, doing a fairly good business; but the only building of note is the main mosque, Jami' Masjid, of uncertain date, but certainly fully three hundred years old, as it contains a tablet with an inscription stating that in the year 1612 A.D. (1021 A.H.) Shah Abbas had granted a bequest of a certain piece of land.²

On alighting from our vehicle after the long journey to Omar's home, it was almost instinctive for us to turn our footsteps first to 'the potter's shop,' described in the section of the *Rubaiyat*³ called *Kūzah Nāmah*, 'the Potter's Book.' Pot-making seemed to be more of a trade at Nishapur than in any city I have seen in my three journeys through Persia, although the ceramic art is one of the oldest in Iran, being mentioned in the Avesta.⁴ Almost adjoining our halting-place was a row of potters' workshops, each leading in turn to another, and still again to others, and in each could be seen 'a potter thumping his wet clay.'⁵ Back of most of the shops was a muddy court-

¹ Cf. Nasir ad-Din Shah, *Diary*, p. 156.

² Some of the details in this paragraph regarding the modern city have been taken from Yate, *Khurasan*, p. 109. Khanikoff, *Mémoire*, p. 94, notes the existence of a shrine of a local saint, called Nauruz, in which is a memorial tablet bearing the date 1094 A.H. = 1683 A.D.

³ FG. 59 (82), P. 509, Th. 59, H-A.

103, *dar kārgah-i kūzahgarī raftam dūsh*, 'into the workshop of the potter I came at eve'; cf. also FG. 36 (37).

⁴ Avesta, Vd. 2. 32; 8. 84.

⁵ FG. 36 (37), Th. 36, H-A. 89, P. 434, Wh. 252, *dī kūzahgarī ba-dīdam andar bāzār / bar tāzah gili lakd hamī sād bisiār*, 'yesterday I saw in the bazar a potter, who kept striking many a blow upon the fresh clay.'



IN A POTTER'S SHOP AT NISHAPUR



A POTTER THUMPING HIS WET CLAY

yard where the clay was moistened, stamped, and pounded until ready to go to the potter's lathe for shaping. Yonder were great rolls of sticky earth that looked more like giant horse-collars or elongated automobile-tires than anything else to which I can liken them. Nearer by were lying smaller masses of sluggish mud, resembling in shape our baker's loaves, which the potter was kneading before giving the plastic stuff its final form.

Inside the doorway of the shop sat the skilled artizan deftly plying his trade. His foot swiftly propelled a horizontal wheel that turned a perpendicular lathe upon which his cunning hand molded the shapeless clay into a dozen different forms. The never-ceasing whir of the wheel beat rhythmic time to the play of his subtle fingers over the now responsive reeling mass. On the rude shelves of the shop were displayed evidences of his workmanship in the form of wares for sale.

‘Shapes of all sorts and sizes, great and small,
That stood along the floor and by the wall.’¹

Amid this ‘earthen lot’ were big jars (*līna*), water jugs (*khum-i āb*), little pots (*kūzah kūchik*), and bowls like those that were once intended for Omar’s wine, vessels crude and vessels finely wrought, shapes all ungainly, as well as forms of graceful contour. I fancied I could hear them talk together in phrases from Omar’s book.² But — ‘all this of pot and potter.’

The bazars were our next objective point, yet a sorry sight are the marts of Nishapur today, with its one-time extensive population now reduced to ten or fifteen thousand dwellers. A score and more of smaller towns in Persia, I think, can boast of better equipped shops than those wretched booths in

¹ FG. 4 ed. 83.

² FG. 60 (87), cf. Th. 60, H-A. 103, P. 509, Wh. 283, *didam dū hazār kūzah guyā u khamūsh / nāgāh yakī kūzah bar āvard kharūsh / kū kūzahgar u kūzahkhar u kūzah-farūsh*, ‘I saw

two thousand pots, (some) talking, (some) silent; suddenly one of the pots cried out, “Where is the pot-maker, where the pot-buyer, and where the pot-seller?”’

the narrow covered lanes of its emporium. There was visible, it is true, the usual amount of dirt and filth that seems to be inseparable from the real Eastern bazar. There were present likewise the representative fruit-dealers, cap-makers, cobblers, rope-spinners, cloth-merchants, and men of other trades, just as there were when the Oriental writers of medieval days described the town and its industries.¹ Spread out on stands before the stalls could be seen fine specimens of the *ribās*, or rhubarb plant, just as they were when Yakut stayed at Nishapur in 1216 A.D. (618 A.H.), for he says that 'a single one of these plants ordinarily weighs a *man* (over a pound) or more, while specimens are seen weighing five *ratls* of the measure of Irak.'² This number is outdone by Ahmad Razi, author of the 'Seven Climes' (1595 A.D.), for he states that a specimen of this plant, which was sent to an Abbasid caliph, weighed 'seventeen *mans*.'

Our guide through the tortuous ways of the bazar was an interesting little Persian lad, about twelve years of age, named Ali — a rival in brightness to Kipling's Indian Kim. Ali had taken us in charge almost from the moment when our horses drew up at the post, and he now proceeded to perform the office of *valet de place* by conducting us to the best shops where my friend and I could get some refreshment after our eight weary hours of travel since dawn. The 'loaf of bread'³ underneath the covered booth was the typical sheet of Persian dough, a yard long and a foot broad, with the outward semblance of a thick chamois skin. But it tasted well as an accompaniment to a *kabāb*-roast of Persian lamb with a draught of tea, if not

¹ Cf. Le Strange, pp. 384, 386.

² Yakut, tr. Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 579. See Ahmad Razi, *Haft Iklim*, cited by Barbier de Meynard, *op. cit.* p. 579, n. 2. Nasir ad-Din Shah, *Diary*, p. 157, also mentions the rhubarb roots from the mountains of Nishapur. An old Iranian legend

makes the first man and woman on this earth to have sprung from 'a single-stemmed rhubarb plant' (*ribās*), according to Bd. 15. 2-5.

³ Cf. FG. 11 (12), Th. 11, H-A. 149, P. 829, *nāsf-i nānī*, 'half a loaf of bread.'



A DERVISH IN THE BAZAR



THE SHRINE OF NAHRUK, WHICH OXAR'S TOMB ADJOINS

wine, to wash it down. The conversation was kept lively by Ali's incessant chatter with the booth-keepers, to whose restaurantal favor he had commended us. The little fellow's own importance was meanwhile steadily growing with the ever-enlarging number of merchants who came from the neighboring shops and sought to induce the urchin to let us inspect their wares.

A tour through the shops was accordingly begun; but Ali had no intention of allowing his two foreign visitors to be mercilessly cheated or even unduly overcharged by a single tradesman; for, whenever he thought the price unreasonable, he promptly and firmly insisted that we should not purchase; and he always saw to it that we received the correct amount of change for every purchase, even in so small a matter as an old Nishapur lock and key, which I bought because of Omar's metaphorical mention of the key (*miftāḥ*) to unlock the treasures of meaning, although FitzGerald's version of the stanza is a different one.¹ We really wondered how the little fellow dared to be so judicially impartial. For that reason I have often thought of Ali since, and have felt that if he did collect any commission later on the sales, he fully earned any percentage he may have received.

The main public square, or *maidān* (pronounced here, as elsewhere, 'maydoon'), in the midst of the bazar was a small quadrangle measuring hardly a hundred feet on either side. It was not a place for a great concourse of people, as must have been the Murabba'ah al-Kabirah, or 'Great Square,' in the market mentioned by the Arab geographers in the tenth century, before the destruction of the older city, described below.² Nor was it a grand campus like the vast Maidan at

¹ See FG. 1 ed. 32 = 4 ed. 32, and compare Th. 55, P. 628, Wh. 389. For the image of the 'door to which I found no key' the Persian (Th. 32) has 'the secrets of eternity neither thou knowest nor I' (*asrār-i azalra nah tū dānī u nah*

man); and for the line FG. 55 (76) the Persian has literally 'a key for the treasures of spiritual meanings he made.'

² On the 'Great Square' and the 'Little Square' at Nishapur see Le Strange, p. 384.

Isfahan,¹ which Omar had once seen, and across whose wide expanse in polo days of yore was driven the ball which 'no question makes of ayes and noes.'²

The chief mosque, or Jami' Masjid, mentioned above, from whose tower daily at dawn the Muazzin's cry arises, was in another part of the town;³ but it was a comparatively insignificant affair and, though several centuries old, as already stated, it could not have been the noble edifice described by Oriental writers before Omar was born.⁴ Nor did we see a trace of any madrasah, or college, that might have been worthy of Omar's fame, or like the one where he is said to have enunciated his belief in the transmigration of the soul by humorously pretending to recognize the spirit of one of his old professors in the form of a jackass that refused to carry a load of bricks into the courtyard of the building until it had received due recognition from its colleagues on the faculty.⁵

During our jaunt about the town not a noteworthy person did we see except a wandering dervish, dressed in tatters and rags, who roamed through the bazar, begging-bowl in hand, asking for alms, and gladly receiving the bakshish we gave when he stood to be photographed. I suppose he looked quite the same as those seemingly pious mendicants — often wolves in sheep's clothing — who were found in the streets in Omar's time, and of whose hypocrisy he was so intolerant.

But perhaps I misjudged the man, and I should hate to do him a wrong. So let him pass, for the days of the real Omar are no more; and perhaps his own shade might arise to check

¹ For the great plaza at Isfahan see my *Persia*, pp. 266-267, 270 (picture).

² FG. 50 (70), Th. 50, P. 682, Wh. 401, *ai raftah ba-chūgān-i kadā hamchū gū*, 'O thou who art driven like a ball by the mallet of fate.'

³ FG. 24 (25). In the original Persian of this passage (Th. 24, cf. Wh. 376, P. 638) the image is not of the

Muezzin from the Tower,' but of 'a crier coming from ambush' (*munādi dar āiad zi kamīn*) to give warning about the road.

⁴ See the account of the great mosque of olden times in Nishapur given on p. 252, below.

⁵ For this Oriental story see Browne, *Lit. Hist. Persia*, 2. 254-255.

our criticism and tell us that Nishapur itself has changed, though I frankly doubt if the spirit has altered. This very thought at the time made it more natural to wish to see the great thinker's grave, so we started anon to visit his tomb in the environs of the city, as will be described in the chapter that follows.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE TOMB OF OMAR KHAYYAM

'Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who
Before us pass'd the door of Darkness through,
Not one returns to tell us of the Road,
Which to discover we must travel too.'

— FITZGERALD, *Rubáiyat of Omar Khayyam*, 64.

THE afternoon sun was beginning to light up the lingering streaks of snow which gleamed in steel-like bands upon the distant mountains as we drove out to visit Omar Khayyam's tomb, which lies about four miles southeast of the city, just beyond the ruined site of Shadiakh, the once delightful suburb of the older city of Nishapur that lay in earlier times in that direction and not far from it.

Our road ran for a time through an old graveyard, recalling the fact that the 'cemetery of the Descendants of Husain,' mentioned by the Oriental geographers of a thousand years ago, lay southward from the bazar of the older city, although it could not be identical with this crumbling home of the dead. Not far distant, on the lower side of ruined Shadiakh, was the tomb of the poet Farid ad-Din Attar, already mentioned. He lived at Nishapur and died there in 1230 A.D.¹

The fields of poppies springing up by the wayside — though not Omar's roses and tulips that marked the blood of buried kings² — formed a bright contrast to the dusty heaps of clay and sand that outlined the walls of the Shahr-i Kuhnah,

¹ Khanikoff, *Mémoire*, p. 94, notes that Attar's tomb is marked by a black marble tablet bearing a long inscription in verse; but Omar's grave has nothing to mark its identity.

² FG. 18 (19), Th. 18, H-A. 43, P.

109, Wh. 104, *har jā kih gulī u lālah zārī būd-ast/az surkhī khūn-i shahrī-ārī būd-ast*, 'each place where a rose or tulip-bed hath been, hath been the red blood of a ruler.'



DISTANT VIEW OF THE MOSQUE OF MAHRUK ADJOINING OMAE'S GRAVE

or 'Old City,' with its story of a buried past, as told in the following chapter.

Yet all this time, as we drove along, the turquoise dome of the Mosque of the Imam-zadah Mahruk, which Omar's grave adjoins, had been glancing ever nearer on the view. The delicate greenish blue of its vaulted dome, encircled by arabesque scrolls in yellow and white, had come out clearer and clearer to the eye. A few minutes more and we were at the gate of the white-walled enclosure around the precinct, over which high waving trees bowed salutation as we drove up.

Upon reaching the arched portal of the entrance, a mass of emerald bushes and yellow flowering shrubs, amid a profusion of rose-blossoms, burst upon the view. It was a truly typical Persian garden, with roughly outlined walks and stone-coped water-courses, and with shade-trees and flowers on every hand. I thought of the story told by Nizami of Samarkand, a devoted disciple of Omar, who had visited his master's grave some years after the great man's death, in 1123, and who told the story of Omar's prophecy that his grave would be where flowers in the springtime would shed their petals over his dust. The story told by Nizami is now well known, and I translate it literally here, beginning from the point where the disciple says his master had made the prediction more than a score of years before.

'At Balkh, in the year 506 A.H. (= 1112-1113 A.D.), when Omar Khayyam and Muzaffar-i Isfari had put up at the sarai of Amir Abu Sa'id in the street of the slave-dealers, I joined the company, and in the midst of that social gathering I heard Omar, that Proof of Truth, say: "My grave will be in a place where every spring the north wind will scatter roses" [*gul*, literally 'rose,' but used also of flowers or blossoms in general]. To me this saying seemed incredible, but I knew that his like would not say anything foolish. When I came to Nishapur in the year 530 A.H. (= 1135-1136 A.D.)—it being four[teen] years since that great soul had drawn on the veil of dust (i.e. died) and the inferior world had become orphaned of him—I went on Friday eve to visit his tomb, because he had upon me the claim of a master. I took with me some one who could point out to me his grave (lit. 'dust'),

and he took me out to the Hirah Cemetery. I turned to the left and saw his grave (lit. 'dust') located at the end of the garden-wall. Pear-trees and peach-trees raised their heads from outside the garden; and so great a shower of blossoms (*shikūfat*) was poured upon his grave that the grave became hidden beneath the roses [*gul*, literally 'rose,' but used also of flowers or blossoms in general]; and the saying occurred to me, which I had heard from him at Balkh. Thereupon I began to weep, because I saw nowhere any one like to him in all this world or in all the regions of the universe.' ¹

We turned to the left, as did Nizami of Samarkand eight hundred years ago, and approached the spot where rests the dust of him who gave expression in quatrain poetry to Persia's freest thought.

Though at the end of the garden wall, Omar's grave is now beneath an arched wing ² that has been added to the left of the Mosque of the Imam-zadah Muhammad Mahruk, a Moslem saint of the eighth century A.D., who was martyred fully three hundred years before Omar's time. ³ The present edifice, which

¹ This interesting passage is from Nizami of Samarkand, *Chahār Makāla*, edited by Muhammad of Kazvin, in Browne's Gibb Memorial Series, pp. 62-63, London, 1910. Consult also the rendering by Browne, *Lit. Hist. Persia*, 2. 247, reproduced from his translation in *JRAS.* 1899, pp. 100-101; and compare the comment made on *gul*, 'rose,' below. It may also be of interest to note that the story of the rose-blossoms has long been known to the Occident, being recorded, for instance, by Hyde, *Historia Religionis Veterum Persarum*, pp. 498-500, Oxford, 1700, and now familiar to almost everyone who knows of Omar Khayyam.

² Even in 1822 Fraser, p. 401, when speaking of the Mosque of Mahruk, said: 'Close by this large edifice there is a small building, in which repose the relics of Omar Keyoomee, a

poet who flourished in the days of the celebrated Nizamool Moolk.'

³ Imam-zadah Muhammad Mahruk, was called *Mahrūk*, 'Burnt,' because he was burned to death by one of the Sunnite governors of Khurasan for having converted to the Shiite tenets a princess of the Caliph's family, with whom he had fallen in love (Sykes, *Pilgrimage*, p. 137). Nasir ad-Din Shah, *Diary*, p. 156, simply notes 'Mahruk the Burnt was so named because he was burned alive by the enemies of the true religion; at his grave is an inscribed stone, said to be seven yards long, although only one yard of it is above ground.' Mahruk was a relative of the famous saint, Imam Riza, of Mashad, who died in 817 A.D. (Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1180, and *Pilgrimage*, p. 137); according to Fraser, p. 400 (cf. also p. 518), he was Imam Riza's brother. Yate,



PORTAL AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE GARDEN WHERE OMAR LIES BURIED



THE TOMB OF OMAR KHAYYAN

serves as the saint's mortuary shrine, appears to have been erected in the seventeenth century, probably to supplant a dilapidated building, and it is a place of pious pilgrimage for the faithful of Islam. We paid little attention to the sanctuary, however, for the grave of Omar was the only object of interest to us.

The sarcophagus stands beneath the central one of three arched recesses, its niche measuring about thirteen feet across, while the flanking arches measure about ten feet each and are empty. A couple of terraced brick steps lead up to the flooring where it rests. The oblong tomb is a simple case made of brick and cement, the poet's remains reposing beneath; and, although there is no inscription to tell whose bones are interred below, every one knows that it is Omar's grave. Vandal scribblers (found in Persia as in every other land) have desecrated it with random scrawls, and have also scratched their names upon the brown mortar of the adjoining walls, thus disclosing the white cement underneath. A stick of wood, a stone, and some fragments of shards profaned the top of the sarcophagus when we saw it. There was nothing else. I was tempted to lay my copy of the *Rubaiyat* upon it, but for the fact that I knew the little book would promptly be carried off and sold to the first possible purchaser.

An elderly priest, one of the Mullahs attached to the mosque, came forward and greeted us politely. Roses formed a part of his proffered welcome, for the Persians like to present flowers as a sign of hospitality. But no rose-tree can now shed its petals upon the poet's tomb, as was once the case in fulfilment of what had been, as tradition tells us, the dearest wish of his heart. It is true that Professor Edward G. Browne, of Cambridge, England, the best Persian scholar now living, believes that the story of Omar's prediction that he would be buried where roses (*gul*) would fall in showers upon his grave is to be

p. 411, says, 'Mahruk was the great-grandson of Imam Zain ul-Abidin, who [he?] was murdered and burnt by Yazid, governor of Khurasan, about the middle of the eighth century.'

regarded as a shattered idol so far as strict fulfilment is concerned ; and that the word *gul* (again repeated) in the text of the passage translated above is to be interpreted, not as roses, but in a broader sense, as referring to any flower and to the blossoms of fruit trees, the pear and the peach tree (*amrūd u zardālū*) being especially alluded to in the narrative.¹ Nevertheless, as Dr. E. Dennison Ross rightly observes, 'it is quite probable that the poet's tomb is, or at least was, annually covered both by rose-leaves and by fruit blossoms';² and I may add that the garden today is so rich in roses as almost 'to make one in love with death,' as Shelley said of Keats's burial-place. Nor can I fail to feel that the Cambridge professor, whom I know well, may possibly modify his view if ever he visits Omar's grave.

It is to be regretted that some of Omar's admirers in the Occident do not provide a suitable inscription on the spot to show the renown he enjoys in the West. However, the site where he rests, like the tombs of Hafiz and Sa'di at Shiraz, is preserved from forgetfulness by the mosque which it adjoins.³ In this respect it is not like that of the great epic poet Firdausi, which is practically forgotten amid the ruins of Tus. It is safe to predict, moreover, that Omar's growing fame in Europe and America will bring other pilgrims to his grave.

We had paid our obeisance, and the word was now 'return.' As we galloped off along the broad road leading back to the town, I scattered some rose-leaves by the way in order that the path to Omar's tomb, if not the grave itself, might be strewn with the roses that he loved.

Before leaving Nishapur that night, we wished to taste a draft from a jug of the wine made famous by Omar's lines. Our messenger returned after a search around the town, only

¹ Browne, *Yet more Light on 'Umar-i-Khayyām*, in *JRAS.* 1899, p. 414, and his *Lit. Hist. Persia*, 2. 247-248, as well as his preface to the edition of the *Chahār Makāla*, pp. xiii-

xiv (Gibb Memorial Series, vol. 11).

² See Batson and Ross, *The Ruba'iyat*, p. 39.

³ On the tombs of Hafiz and Sa'di see my *Persia*, pp. 332-334.

to bring a vile specimen of Russian vodka! What would the spirit of Omar have said about 'the old familiar juice'?

The approach of darkness was already noticeable as we drove out of the city to resume our journey, passing once more by the road that leads near Omar's grave. The sun's dying shimmer lit up anew the snowy lines on the distant mountain tops, while we halted our horses for a moment to bid a last adieu to the poet and his home. Happily we found that our Armenian servant, Hovannes Agopian, had preserved in his pack a pint bottle of red wine which he had purchased in another town on the journey. It seemed the fitting hour to drain a cup in Omar's memory, even though not handed by the Saki, his 'cypress-slender minister of wine.' 'Yon waxing moon' was already rising, and soon would be looking down upon the quiet garden where Omar lies in dust, forming no longer one of the company of 'guests star-scattered on the grass.' We joined in quaffing the sparkling cup in his name; and, as we turned down the 'empty glass,' it was with the wish that only that which is best may remain in after ages connected with the fame of the great astronomer, philosopher, and poet. Then off we cantered, falling into a revery and wondering about the widely divergent views, favorable and unfavorable, that are held by critics of Omar Khayyam in the West and in the East. Some have praised his verses for their bold expression of certain thoughts that lie deep in the heart of man. More have decried his stanzas, branding them as sensual in their portrayal of love, pessimistic in their philosophic tone, and blasphemous in their attitude of irreligion. As to the final judgment in all such matters, no better phrase can be used than the old familiar one of the Orient — 'Allah alone knows, He knows, He knows, He knows.'

CHAPTER XIX

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF NISHAPUR

‘ And still I seem to tread on classic ground.’

— ADDISON, *Letter from Italy*.

IN the Orient the city of Nishapur owes its renown in no wise to Omar Khayyam, but to the fact that it is one of the most ancient and famous cities of Iran. A brief sketch of its history, prefaced by a comment on the origin of its name, may therefore form an appropriate supplement to the two preceding chapters.

The name *Ni-shāpūr*, which the Arab conquerors pronounced as *Nai-sābūr*, is believed to contain the name of the Sasanian king Shapur, or Sapor, though the real meaning of the first member of the compound is not quite certain. The older pronunciation in Persian appears to have been *Nē-shāpūr*, derived from a still earlier presumable form *Nēv-shāpūr*, to be inferred from the Pahlavi designation *Nēv-shāpūhr* and the Armenian *Niu-shapuh*.¹ The meaning of the word *nēv* in the earlier Persian (cf. Old Pers. *naiba*) is ‘good, fair,’ and the signification of the appellation would consequently be ‘the Good Shapur’ or ‘the Fair (City of) Shapur.’² Popular etymologies by medieval Oriental writers are not wanting. Mustaufi (1340 A.D.), for example, affirms that after the destruction of the ancient city which the legendary king Tahmuras had founded in pre-historic times, the first Sasanian monarch, Ardashir Babagan

¹ References to the occurrence of the name in Pahlavi and in Armenian will be found in connection with the passages cited in the notes below, pp. 249, n. 3; 250, n. 4.

² So Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser*

und Araber aus der Chronik des Tabarī, p. 59, n. 3, Leiden, 1879; and compare Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, p. 383; Hübschmann, *Armenische Grammatik*, 1. 20–21, Leipzig, 1895.

(224–241 A.D.), built another city, which he called *Nih*. This city his son, Shapur (I), then governor of Khurasan, asked as a present; but his father refused, and Shapur, in pique, erected upon the ruins of the ancient site a new city which he called *Nih-Shāpūr*, out of which name the Arabs later made *Nai-sābūr*.¹ Yakut (who lived at Nishapur for a time, in 1216 A.D.) gives another fanciful etymology, namely *Nai-sābūr*, ‘Reedy Shapur,’ from the beds of reeds (*nai*) which once abounded in the vicinity;² and he includes also a report of a still more fanciful explanation, based upon a legend current among the people, that once, when Shapur was missing, those who were sent in search of the fugitive prince came to where Nishapur now stands; but, not finding him, said, ‘Sabur is not here’ (*nī[st]-sābūr*)!’³ But enough of such guesses.

Such was the historic celebrity of Nishapur that other names are reported to have been applied to it. Thus a common designation for the city in early Moslem days was *Abr-shahr*, meaning in Persian ‘Cloud-city,’ a name found also in Armenian writers, and applied to the district as well as to the town.⁴ Another term, probably honorific, was *Īrān-shahr*, ‘the City of Iran,’ which was employed by Mukaddasi and others as an alternate title in describing Nishapur;⁵ while wholly complimentary was the designation ‘Vestibule of the East.’⁶

This variety in nomenclature tends to show the fame which

¹ So Mustaufi, quoted by Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 578, n. 1.

² Yakut, tr. Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 578. This explanation was found also in a marginal note on a manuscript of the earlier Idrisi (1154), tr. Jaubert, *Géog. d'Édrisi*, 2. 182, n. 1, and is repeated by Abu'l Fida (1321), *Geography*, p. 451.

³ See Yakut, *op. cit.* pp. 578–579.

⁴ See, for example, the historian Tabari (839–923 A.D.), tr. Nöldeke, *Gesch. Pers. Sas. aus Tabari*, p. 17; Yakut, tr. Barbier de Meynard, *Dict.*

géog. pp. 7–8. For references to the Armenian historians, Moses Khorenac'i (*Geog.* 29—assigned to fifth century A.D., but later), Elishe Vartapet (fifth century A.D.), and Lazar P'arpec'i (fifth–sixth century A.D.), see Langlois, *Histoire de l'Arménie*, 2. 186, n. 1, 229, 306, 308; and cf. Marquart, *Ērānshahr*, pp. 16, 74–75.

⁵ Thus Mukaddasi, 3. 299–300 (with a discussion of the designation) and 314; see also Masudi, 8. 78; and cf. Le Strange, p. 283.

⁶ Applied by Yakut, *op. cit.* p. 580.

Nishapur has long enjoyed, although the haze of antiquity is gathered about the origin of the city, so old is believed to have been its existence. Legend, already mentioned, ascribes its foundation to the third earliest king of Persia, Tahmuras, surnamed 'Binder of Demons,' whose name is mentioned in the Avesta as Takhma Urupi, of the Pishdadian dynasty, and the fabled date of whose accession to the throne of Iran was 8777 B.C.¹ Of like import is a record by the Arabic chronicler Tabari, preserved in Bel'ami's Persian version made a thousand years ago, to the effect that in the reign of Minuschihr (about 1100 B.C.) the Turanians, under Afrasiab, gained possession of Nishapur for a time.² Even if these claims cannot be entertained as genuine history, it nevertheless tends to prove that the city was known in the earliest times; and this would be in keeping with the tradition that Zoroaster caused a new fire-temple (presumably that of Burzin Mihr, alluded to above, p. 211) to be built in its vicinity.³ It has been thought, moreover, that Nishapur is possibly mentioned in the Avesta as Nisaya; but owing to the location given it, that is probably quite a different town.⁴ Among the fairly reliable data point-

¹ This monarch, the Takhma Urupi of the Avesta (Yt. 15. 11; 19. 28; Afrin-i Zaratusht, 2; see Bartholomae, *Air. Wb.* col. 1532, Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, p. 320), is called Takhmurup or Tahmurath, Tahmuras in the later texts; for his fabled date, see West, *SBE.* 47. p. xxix, and cf. Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 180.

² Tabari, *Chronique, sur la version persane de Bel'ami*, tr. Zotenberg, 1. 297, Paris, 1867.

³ Besides the references to the Burzin Mihr Fire given above, p. 211, see Masudi, *Prairies d'or*, 4. 72, Shahrastani (tr. Haarbrücker, 1. 291), referred to in Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 98; and add that Ibn Fakih of Hamadan, 5. 254 (ed. De Goeje) says, 'the fire of

Zardusht, which is in the region of Nishapur, has not been removed [as were the other fires], and it is one of the original fires.' See also Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer*, pp. 290-293, Leipzig, 1880.

⁴ The Avestan reference is Vd. 1. 7, *Nisāim yim antar Mōurumca Bāz-dīmca*, 'Nisaya, which is between Merv and Balkh' (the attribute of location being probably added to distinguish this *Nisāya* from the province of *Nisāya* in Media, which is mentioned in the Old Persian Inscriptions, 1. 13 [58]; cf. Geiger, *Ostiranische Kultur*, p. 72; Darmesteter, *Le Zend Avesta*, 2. 9, n. 17). Spiegel, *Ērān. Alt.* 2. 631-632, hesitatingly identifies



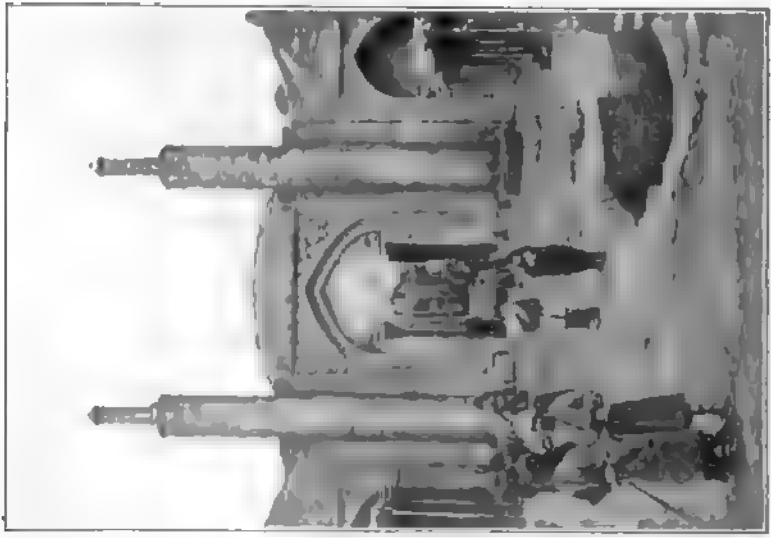
AFRASIAB, THE LEGENDARY RULER OF TURAN
(From a medieval portrait in a Persian Manuscript)



THE SASSANIAN MONARCH SHAPUR I
(From an antique gem)



A PERSIAN PREPARING RAW COTTON



THE DYERS' GATE AT NISHAPUR

ing to the antiquity of the city, we may place the assumption of Firdausi that Nishapur had been in existence for several centuries before Christ, since he recounts that Sasan, the son of Bahman (referred to above), married a wife from a noble family of Nishapur and thus became the ancestor of the Sasanian line that ruled over Iran from the third to the seventh century of our era.¹

For the Sasanian period there is proof enough to show that Nishapur was firmly established as one of the great metropolitan centers of the East. Sasanian coins dug up among the ruins today bear numismatic witness to this fact;² and this evidence is supported by equally credible testimony from Pahlavi literature and Muhammadan sources, even though there may be some question whether the Sasanian king Shapur I (241–292 A.D.) or Shapur II (309–379) was the builder or re-builder of the town. Thus, in the Pahlavi list of 'Cities of Iran' it is said that 'Shapur (I), son of Artashir, built the city of Nev-shapuhr at the place where he slew Palezhak the Turanian, and he ordered a city to be made on the spot.'³ Some of the Muham-

Nisaya with Nishapur and with the *Nḡsala* of Strabo, p. 511; compare also Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 261. In favor of such a view we might possibly add the statement of Yakut (tr. Barbier de Meynard, p. 578), that Ptolemy says 'Nishapur was situated long. 85°, lat. 39°,' though he corrects the figures as to its position. This reference appears to relate to Ptolemy, *Geog.* 6. 10. 4 (ed. Nobbe, 2. 115), *Nḡsala*, although that is given as located in Margiana. It seems certain that the Avestan 'Nisaya, which is between Merv and Balkh,' is the same as *Nsai-mianak*, 'Middle Nisa,' mentioned in the Armenian geography of Moses of Chorene, 29 (see Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, pp. 16, 78–79), and identical with the place mentioned in a gloss of Hesychius as *Nḡsala* • μεταξὺ τῆς Σουσιανῆς

καὶ τῆς Βακτριανῆς (see Hesychius, ed. Schmidt, col. 1088). Furthermore, for classical references see the article 'Nesaea,' in Smith, *Dictionary of Gk. and Rom. Geog.* 2. 421. A different place was the town and province of *Nisā*, far north of Nishapur and located near Ustuva and Abivard, which is several times referred to in the Arab geographers (see Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, pp. 377, 393, 394, 429, 430, and map viii; and compare Justi, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 483; Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, 2. 66).

¹ See Firdausi, tr. Mohl, *Livre des rois*, 5. 12–13; and cf. Nöldeke, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 169.

² See Yate, p. 412, and other writers on the subject.

³ *Shatrōihā-i Airān*, § 15 (ed. Jamasp-Asana, p. 19; tr. Modi, pp. 67,

madan material (Arab and Persian) to prove the existence of Nishapur in Sasanian times has already been given. To the statements above quoted from Mustaufi and Yakut, assigning the foundation to Shapur I, may be added the authority of Hamzah of Isfahan (eleventh century A.D.);¹ while Shapur II is to be accredited with the city's origin, according to the historians Tabari (900 A.D.) and Masudi (943);² and we further add that Firdausi (1000) associates Nishapur, in the reign of the Sasanian king Yazdagard II (438–457 A.D.), with the old Persian cities of Tus, Bust, and Merv.³ Besides these and other Moslem references, there are a number of Armenian allusions to historic events connected with Nishapur in Sasanian times, which show how important a metropolis the city was during that period.⁴ From Christian Syriac sources we know that by 430 A.D. Nishapur, as the capital of the district Abrshahr, was the see-city of the Nestorian diocese of the same

145–146, 177–179; = § 16, tr. Blochet, pp. 165, 168, 172 — see full titles above, p. 162, n. 2). There are other references in Pahlavi literature to show that Nishapur was prominent in Sasanian times, *e.g.* *Arta Viraf*, 1. 35 (ed. Haug and West, text, pp. 7, 148, glossary, pp. 229, 250), *Bahman Yasht*, 1. 7; *Epistle of Manuschihar*, 2. 1. 2; *Yosht-i Fryano*, 6. 2; and see West, *SBE.* 5. 194; 18. 325; and *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 108.

¹ See Hamzah of Isfahan, ed. Gottwaldt, p. 48, Leipzig, 1848; and compare Marquart, *Ērānshahr*, p. 49. It should be noted that Mustaufi in another passage (cited by Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 578, n. 1) states that Khusrau I (531–579 A.D.) laid out the city in a form 'like a chessboard,' and he adds (with an apparent confusion of dates) that Shapur II (Dhu-'l Aktaf, 309–379 A.D.) 'enlarged it.' Ferrier, p. 104,

who believed that Alexander the Great destroyed the town, says, 'Shahpoor restored it, and, to perpetuate the fact, gave it his name, and erected an immense statue, which remained standing until the first invasion of the country by the Mussulmans, who in their zeal destroyed it.' The authority (local?) for this statement about the statue (repeated by Curzon, 1. 261) I have not been able to find.

² See Tabari, tr. Nöldeke, *Gesch. Pers. Sas.* pp. 59, 67; Masudi, *Prairies d'or*, tr. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille, 2. 188, Paris, 1861.

³ Firdausi, tr. Mohl, 7. 377.

⁴ See, for example, the allusions made to Nishapur by Elishe Vartapet (fifth century A.D.) and Lazar P'arpec'i in Langlois, *Collection des historiens de l'Arménie*, 2. 186, n. 1, 229 ('satraps and priests at Nishapur'), 242 ('priests').

name, although later, in 499, that bishopric had been amalgamated with Tus.¹

Historic events associated with Nishapur's history after the Muhammadan conquest are referred to in abundance, and allow the story of the city's subsequent fortunes to be traced with a fair amount of fulness. The town appears to have fallen an easy prey to the Arab conquerors, capitulating to the troops of the third Caliph, Othman, in 651–652 A.D. (31 A.H.), or, according to another account, to his predecessor Omar, after which it revolted and had to be reduced again.² The establishment of a mosque meant that the death-knell of Zoroastrianism here had been struck. Disaffection, however, must have been rife, as six years later (37 A.H. = 657–658 A.D.) an uprising at Nishapur had to be quelled by forces despatched by Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad;³ and for some time prior to 672 A.D. a Sasanian claimant to the throne still resided here.⁴ By the ninth century Nishapur was a Moslem city of first importance; the early Taharid ruler, Abdullah (824–844), chose it as his residence in preference to Merv, 'because,' he said, 'of its good climate, its agreeable people, and its large population'; and his successors followed his example.⁵

From this time onward, for the next three hundred years, all the Arab-Persian geographers — Ibn Khurdadhbah (864), Kudamah (880), Yakubi (891), and the rest — mention Nishapur as one of the great cities of Persia, but it is unnecessary here to quote from a detailed collection made of their allusions, since they can be found admirably summarized by Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, pp. 383–386.

¹ See Guidi, *Ostsyrische Bischöfe und Bischofs-sitze*, in *ZDMG*. 43. 396–401; and compare Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, p. 75.

² See Yakut, tr. Barbier de Meynard, p. 579.

³ See Dinavari, p. 163, 14, cited by Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, p. 68.

⁴ See Marquart, *op. cit.* p. 68.

⁵ So Mukaddasi, 3. 332; cf. Yakubi, 7. 278, 307; and Yakut, tr. Barbier de Meynard, pp. 340–341. Abdullah was a patron of literature, and at his court lived the poet Hanzallah of Badghis; but he was equally a hater of the Magians and of their religious books; see Browne, *Lit. Hist. Persia*, 1. 346, 355, 452; 2. 275–276.

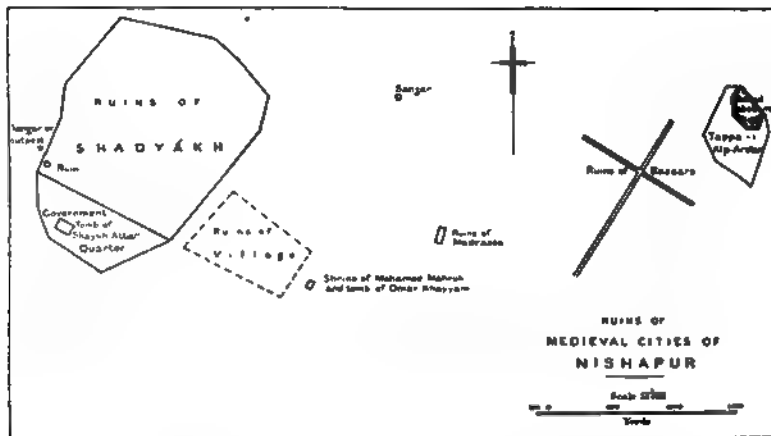
The main features of the city's topography, the character of its situation, and the nature of its people may be gathered from these allusions. The town is praised for its advantageous location in a fertile plain, bordered by mountains, except towards the south, and richly supplied by water from the hillsides, conducted by underground aqueducts or by surface channels, or drawn directly from the Wadi-Saghavar, the river of Nishapur, whose stream turned the wheels of many busy mills. The export trade in cotton, raw silk, and stuff goods was considerable; fruits, especially the rhubarb plant, were grown in abundance.

The city itself was then half a league or a league across; its walls were entered by several gates (all of them named); and there were fifty main streets in the forty-two quarters of the town. The bazars were extensive and well stocked, two of the market-places being especially noteworthy; and there was a fine citadel, a parade-ground, and a thickly populated suburb in which the Friday Mosque stood. The great court of this sanctuary, whose roof was supported on columns of brick, was surrounded by richly decorated arcades, and the whole structure was embellished with marble and gold. Its pulpit dated back to the time of the Abbasid general Abu Muslim, in the middle of the eighth century, although the construction of the edifice as a whole was due to Amr ibn Laith, or Lais, the Saffarid ruler in the latter part of the ninth century.¹ Nishapur was, in fact, so prosperous under the successive dynasties of the Saffarids and Samanids (874-999) that it served as a standard of comparison by which to judge other cities.² A good idea of its condition at this period may be gained from the

¹ Notes regarding this mosque were given by Hafiz Abru of Herat (1420), quoted by Schefer, *Sefer Nameh, relation du voyage de Nassiri Khosrau*, pp. xlviil, 270-280, Paris, 1881; a chapter of this book by Schefer (pp. 277-284) is devoted to the history of

Nishapur. For the date of Abu Muslim (d. 902) see Justi, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 897; Horn, *ibid.* 2. 558.

² It is so used, for example, by Istakhri (951), 1. 202, 207, and by Mukaddasi (985), 3. 270, 301, 314, 329.



MAJOR SYKES'S DIAGRAM OF THE RUINS OF OLDER NISHAPUR



THE CHIEF MOSQUE OF MODERN NISHAPUR

description of it by Ibn Haukal (978), who based his account on Istakhri (951).

‘The city of Nishapur is situated in a plain and extends a farsakh (league) in each direction. Its buildings are of clay. The city consists of the town proper, the citadel, and the outer suburbs. The place around the citadel and the suburbs are well populated. The chief Friday Mosque stands in the suburbs, on the ground called Al-Mu‘askar, “the Military Square,” and the Governor’s Palace, which was built by Amr ibn Laith, called the Maidan al-Husainin; while not far away is the prison.

‘The citadel has two gates, the city four. These last are known respectively, as the Bab al-Kantarrah (‘Bridge Gate’), the Gate of the Street of Ma‘kil, the Bab al-Kuhandiz (‘Fortress Gate’), and the Gate of the Takin Bridge. The citadel is outside the town, and the suburbs lie around both it and the city. [The names of several gates leading to the provinces are given, but may be omitted here.]

‘The bazars lie outside the city, the two most important being the Murabba‘ah al-Kabirah (‘Great Square’) and the Murabba‘ah al-Saghirah (‘Little Square’). Starting westward from the square, the bazar extends as far as the cemetery known as the Makabir al-Husainin (‘Graveyard of the Descendants of Husain’); and at intervals between these two bazars are caravansarais and hostelries, occupied by the merchants with their wares, each bazar having its special merchandise, and each hostelry being as large as a bazar in other cities. [Some details that show the crowded condition of the marts may be omitted here, although special mention is made of hat-makers, bootmakers, cobblers, ropemakers, and cloth merchants.]¹

‘The city of Nishapur is watered by subterraneous channels which run under the houses in the town but are on the surface outside in the fields, thus supplying the inhabitants in the city and their gardens outside of it. Some of these conduits, even in the city, are a hundred feet below ground. There is also a large river, Wadi Saghavar, which supplies it and the neighboring towns and villages.

‘In the whole province of Khurasan there is not a larger city than Nishapur, nor one blessed with a more healthy and more temperate climate; nor is there one that has finer buildings, more extensive commerce, better means of communication, and larger caravansarais. It produces various kinds of fine linens, cotton goods, and raw silk, all of which (because of their excellence and abundance) are exported to other lands of Islam, and even of Christendom; for kings themselves and nobles value them as wearing apparel.

¹ Istakhri gives fuller details about the public squares and streets, Ibn Haukal being more detailed as to the bazars.

‘The villages and the towns in the plain around Nishapur are numerous and well populated. [Their names are given, but omitted here.] In the mountains of Nishapur and Tus are mines, in which are found brass, iron, turquoises, santalum, and the precious stone called malachite; they are said to contain also gold and beryl. In former times the governors of Khurasan resided at Merv or at Balkh, but the Taharid family made Nishapur the capital, and thereafter it grew populous and rich. As is well known, many illustrious personages and learned men have come from this place.’¹

The Seljuk ruler Tughril Beg made Nishapur his capital in 1038, as did his nephew and successor, Alp Arslan (1063–1072), whose name is still kept in the mound called Tapah-i Alp Arslan, near the ruined site that lies east or southeast of the present city.² It was under Alp Arslan’s son, the renowned Malik Shah (1073–1092), that the three celebrated schoolfellows of Nishapur, the poet Omar Khayyam, the statesman Nizam al-Mulk, and the founder of the band of Assassins, Hasan-i Sabbah, are said to have taken an oath in blood that whichever of the three should first achieve success in the world would help the other two to gain higher preferment — an obligation that is said to have been dutifully fulfilled.³ The death of Omar Khayyam, it may be added, occurred at Nishapur about 1123 A.D.⁴

In the year 1145 earthquakes brought havoc upon the city; and shortly afterwards, in 1153, the inroads of the Ghuzz hordes completed the devastation. It was then that the center of population shifted to the adjoining suburb of Shadiakh, which

¹ Ibn Haukal, ed. De Goeje, *Bibl. Geog. Arab.* pp. 310–314. For the version of this passage from the Arabic I am indebted to Dr. Yohannan. Compare also Ouseley, *Oriental Geography*, pp. 214–215, and Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, pp. 383–384.

² Ferrier, p. 104; Yate, p. 413; Sykes, *Sixth Journey*, in *Geog. Journ.* 37. 155. The date (Shavval 429 A.H. = July, 1038 A.D.) when Tughril Beg seated himself on the throne at Nishapur and entrusted the government

to his brother, is given by Mustaufl, *Tārīkh-i Guzidah*, tr. Gantin, 1. 199, Paris, 1903.

³ This story is so familiar to every reader of FitzGerald’s version of Omar Khayyam that it does not need more than an allusion here; but on the question of the dates involved and the authenticity of the facts presented, see Browne, *Lit. Hist. Persia*, 2. 190–193.

⁴ Browne, *op. cit.* 2. 247, n. 1.

had already existed for three centuries, having been first a royal garden, the seat of government, and the headquarters of the troops, and which had gradually grown in importance until it became the heart of the newer city, with a circuit of walls no less than 6700 paces in extent.¹ Shadiakh was the capital when Mu'ayyad Ainiya seized Nishapur, about 1160, and made it his headquarters. The prosperity of the place must then have been considerable, for it was about this time that the Jewish traveler, Benjamin of Tudela, who was at Isfahan in 1168–1169, refers to the fact that a number of Jews were residing at Nishapur or in its vicinity, having doubtless been drawn there by opportunities for trade.² Mu'ayyad's supremacy was not destined to last many years; for he was overcome and slain in 1174 by the invader Takish, Shah of Khvarazm, who duly established himself as lord of the city in 1180, after ravaging Khurasan.³ A generation later we have the interesting account of Nishapur, several times referred to above, from the pen of Yakut, who spent a considerable time, in the year 1216, at Shadiakh, which was then the center of the city.⁴

Shortly after this time, in the year 1221, came the terrible sack of the city by the Mongols under the son of Chingiz Khan, of which catastrophe Yakut gives a graphic account through report, as he himself had previously sought refuge at Mosul. 'Thirsting for blood and plunder,' he writes, 'the invaders rushed through the various quarters of the city, killing every

¹ The foundation of the palace at Shadiakh is ascribed to the Taharid Abdullah (828–844 A.D.), mentioned above, by Yakubi (891), 7. 278. For further details about Shadiakh as a suburb, see Yakut, tr. Barbier de Meynard, pp. 340–342, 579–581; and compare the references to Mustaufi in Le Strange, pp. 385–386.

² See Benjamin of Tudela, *Reisebeschreibungen*, tr. Grünhut and Adler, pp. 72, 73, 75, Jerusalem, 1903; and the English version of the same

traveler's account in Pinkerton's *Voyages*, 7. 10, London, 1811.

³ Skrine and Ross, *Heart of Asia*, pp. 145–146. Cf. Mustaufi, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, tr. Gantin, 1. 219.

⁴ Shadiakh itself had been nearly destroyed by an earthquake in 1208 A.D., see Le Strange, p. 386. The date of Yakut's visit is given by himself: 'In 613 A.H. (= 1216 A.D.), I arrived at Nishapur and took up my residence at Shadiakh'—see Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 341.

one they met, without regard to age or sex; and then they demolished the city, razing it to the ground and inflicting the same fate on the neighboring districts; they even turned up the ground to get any treasures that might be hidden, and I was assured that not a wall was left standing.'¹

In spite of this visitation, Nishapur appears rapidly to have recovered,² and it may be that the rehabilitated town was the city referred to by Marco Polo, about 1272, as 'Sapurgan,' a place of 'great plenty,' although considerable uncertainty attaches to the question.³ Whatever the truth may be, another earthquake was ready to bring wrack and ruin in 1280, when still another Nishapur, the city described by Mustaufi (1840) as encompassed by walls 15,000 paces in circuit, came into being on a different site—possibly on the place formerly occupied when supplanted by the suburb Shadiakh, less than two miles distant; for the heart of Nishapur appears to have pulsed with a double life, and the vitality of the old site may simply have been suspended.⁴

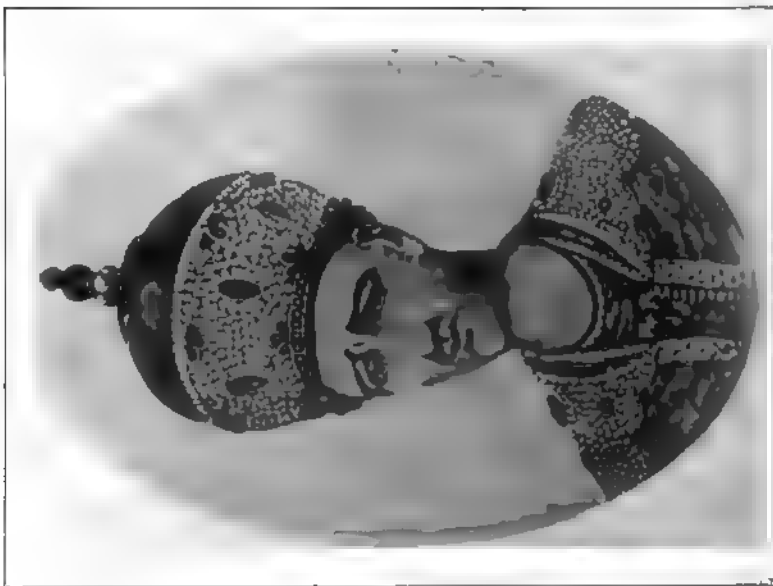
¹ See Yakut, tr. Barbier de Meynard, pp. 580–582; and compare the description of the Mongol ravages in Petits de la Croix, *Histoire de Genghizcan*, p. 378; Eng. tr. by Aubin, *History of Genghiz Can*, pp. 216–217, Calcutta, 1816.

² See the statement, based on Oriental authority, by Schefer, *Sefer Nameh*, p. 281, who adds (pp. 281–282) that Vajah ad-Din Zangi Farivandi, vizir of Khurasan, rebuilt the city in 669 A.H. = 1270 A.D., and he quotes a poem in praise of its reconstruction. Schefer's source (p. 281) allows for an earthquake to have intervened between the Mongol sacking and the rebuilding just referred to; perhaps this is the earthquake alluded to by Yate (p. 413; see the second note below) as occurring in 1267.

³ Marco Polo, ed Yule, l. 149. In

the notes on this passage the editor calls attention to the absence of any mention of Nishapur and Mashad on the road from Damghan to Balkh, although he adds that 'Sapurgan' is generally explained to be 'Shibrgan,' nearly ninety miles west of Balkh. To me it seems certainly reasonable to hold that 'Sapurgan' really represents Nishapur, the city of Shapur.

⁴ The date 1280 A.D., for the earthquake, is given by Le Strange, p. 886; on the other hand, Yate, p. 413, says that 'in 1267 Shadiakh was finally destroyed by an earthquake, and a new town was built near by. That was destroyed by an earthquake in 1405, after which the present town of Nishapur was erected.' On the matter of the earthquake of 1267 see the second preceding note.



**AGHA MUHAMMAD SHAH
(1766-1797 A.D.)**



TYPICAL DRESS OF A PERSIAN WOMAN

Judging from the dates, the town on the site just mentioned was the Nishapur visited by Ibn Batutah, about the year 1355, when he described it as 'a little Damascus, so called because of its fruits, its gardens, and its beauty; four canals traverse it, and its bazars are fine and large; its mosque is admirable, being situated in the midst of the market-place and adjoining four collegiate madrasahs, which are well supplied with water and attended by a large number of students, who devote themselves to law and learn the Kuran; these four madrasahs are among the most beautiful in the province.'¹

The city must have been found in like condition by the Spanish envoy Clavijo a half century later, for he wrote that he and his fellow-ambassadors arrived 'on Saturday, the 26th of July, [1404] . . . at a great city which is called Nishapur. . . The city of Nishapur is in a plain, and is surrounded by gardens and very handsome houses. . . . This city is very large and well supplied with all things. It is the chief city of Media, and here they find turquoises, and, though they are met with in other places, those of Nishapur are the best that are known.'² This town, however, was doomed to destruction by still another earthquake in 1405, when the city of Nishapur on the modern site came into being.

The present settlement, five hundred years old, appears to have been more free from seismic shocks than its immediate predecessors, but it has hardly been more exempt from the ravages of war. The Turkomans have at all times been ready to follow the lead of their marauding ancestors in pillaging the province; the Uzbeks from Transoxiana plundered the city in the latter part of the sixteenth century; and the two Afghan invasions in the eighteenth (the first, which brought the downfall of the Saffarid dynasty, in 1722; the second in 1749, after the death of Nadir Shah) left nothing more than horrors to relate. Yet the city renewed its vigor again under Abbas

¹ Compare the French translation by Defrémery and Sanguinetti, *Voy-*

ages d'Ibn Batoutah, 3. 80, Paris, 1877.

² Clavijo, pp. 107-108.

Kuli Khan, a chieftain of Turkish blood, who encouraged its rebuilding, and who called himself ruler of the district until, in 1796, Nishapur passed into the hands of Agha Muhammad Shah, the eunuch king and head of the reigning Kajar dynasty. Ever since it has retained a position of rank—if not of first rank—in the kingdom of Persia.¹

This sketch of the vicissitudes through which Nishapur has passed is sufficient to show how often the city has shifted its site, though rebuilt again on ground close by, for the area has varied only a few miles, at least during the past thousand years. The earliest site, however, is believed by Major Sykes, who made researches in the vicinity in 1909, to lie some twenty-four miles southeast of the present Nishapur, though the distance seems somewhat great. He was led to this belief by the fact that he had been 'informed on good Persian authority that the ruins of a city of Nishapur, older than those situated three or four miles from the modern site, lay somewhere to the southeast of the present city.'² At a distance of twenty-four miles he found ruins, which he concluded, after examination, were the remains of two adjacent cities, the one somewhat earlier than the other in date, but both presumably Sasanian in age; and, despite their distance from the present location, he felt justified in regarding these ruins as probably occupying the most ancient site of Nishapur, though it must be confessed that the location seems very remote from the present site.

In any event, it is certain that the city of medieval times occupied the two ruined sites still to be recognized about four miles from the present one, in an easterly and southeasterly direction respectively. The city of Omar Khayyam is apparently the more easterly of the two, or the historic site marked by the ruins in the vicinity of the Mound of Alp Arslan. The suburb of Shadiakh, which succeeded it for a time, lay a short distance to the west, and near this latter site is found Omar's

¹ Compare Fraser, pp. 404–405; Ferrier, p. 105; Curzon, 1. 262–263.

² Sykes, *Sixth Journey in Persia*, in *Geog. Journ.* 37. 152.

grave (d. 1123), while not far away is the tomb of the mystic poet Farid ad-Din Attar (d. 1230). After the Mongols stormed the place, as stated above, there is some uncertainty as to the site that was chosen when the town was rebuilt; but owing to the absence of ruins at Shadiakh¹—an absence that would be accounted for by Yakut's statement that it had been razed to the ground, with not a wall left standing—it is probable that the preceding site, or the older regular city to the east, was again selected, a likelihood which is more plausible from what has been previously said (p. 256).²

The present town, or the modern Nishapur that has been described in the preceding chapters, is, as already noted, five centuries old. Its position is an equally good one, for the mountains insure an abundant supply of water, and help to render its climate agreeable and healthy; while its situation, on the main route of traffic to Mashad, with several branch lines of commerce, is in its favor, and a good business is carried on in dried fruits, wool, and cotton, added trade being brought by the turquoise mines (the most famous in the world), which lie not thirty miles distant to the northwest.³

The population of the city has shown a tendency to increase steadily during the past hundred years, and the people of Nishapur throughout their long history have enjoyed a reputation for ability and have been generally regarded with favor.⁴

¹ See Sykes, *op. cit.* p. 156.

² Compare also Sykes, p. 156.

³ These mines, near the village of Ma'dan, 'the Mines,' have been often visited and described by travelers; see, for example, Truilhier, pp. 265–266; Fraser, pp. 407–422; Alexander Chodzko, quoted by Ferrier, pp. 106; Khanikoff, pp. 89–93; among the most recent visitors (publishing photographs) is Lacoste (1906), *Around Afghanistan*, tr. from the French by Anderson, pp. 14–19, New York, 1909.

⁴ In the Orient, where no authori-

tative census is accessible, the estimates as to population are apt to vary considerably. Fraser (1821), p. 405, doubted if there were more than 5000 inhabitants, though the figure given him was double that number; Conolly (1830), 1. 247, estimated 8000; Ferrier, p. 106, the same; Eastwick (1862), 2. 187, raised that to 18,000; Nasir ad-Din Shah (1865), *Diary*, p. 155, gave 12,000; but Sir F. Goldsmid (1872), gave only 8000, according to Curzon, 1. 268, who allowed 10,000; Bassett (1878), p. 217, spoke of 10,000; Yate

A thousand years have gone by since Ibn Fakih of Hamadan (903 A.D.) spoke of the Nishapurians as 'men of policy and good judgment,' while Mukaddasi (985) was greatly impressed by their learning and their luxury, and by their skill as artisans, though he found them somewhat conceited and cold.¹ To these comments may be added the tribute paid, a half century ago, by Nasir ad-Din Shah, on his pilgrimage to Mashad in 1865, who frankly noted in his diary that he found 'the people of Nishapur more civilized than the people of any other city passed on the journey ; a circumstance that proves this is the manner in which their women dress ; the women in all the other cities wore a poor kind of chudder garment and had no face-veils, while in Nishapur they have fine blue chudder coverings and wear veils.'²

On one point there has been no divergence of opinion on the part of critics — the fact that during its long lifetime, especially in its zenith days, Nishapur has ever been a literary center and the home of men of culture and learning. For that reason Yakut, who lived there in 1216, said that, with Merv and Samarkand, it enjoyed the honorary title of *madīnat*, or a city that is the home of savants, and he cites a list of distinguished names to prove the point.³ A glance over the records given by other Oriental writers who mention Nishapur, or at the pages of any standard modern work on Persian literature, will corroborate this statement still more convincingly ;⁴ but however famous such names may be to the literatures of the East, there is none so associated with the city's renown in the minds of the West as that of the astronomer-poet who has made Nishapur to us forever the Home of Omar Khayyam.

(1897), p. 413, rated the number at 12,000 ; while Houtum-Schindler (1910), *Encyclop. Brit.*, eleventh edition (1911), 19. 711, gives 'barely 15,000.'

¹ So Ibn Fakih, 5. 318, and Mukaddasi, 3. 33, 34, 299-300, 314.

² Nasir ad-Din Shah, *Diary*, p. 155.

³ Yakut, tr. Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* pp. 521, 582.

⁴ See, for example, the references to Nishapur in the index of Browne, *Lit. Hist. Persia*, 1. 513 ; 2. 561.





SHAH ABBAS THE GREAT
(1597-1629 A.D.)



THE SHRINE AT KADANGAH, WITH ITS TERRACED GARDEN

CHAPTER XX

MASHAD, THE HOLY CITY OF PERSIA

‘Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages.’

—CHAUCER, *Canterbury Tales*, Prologue, 12.

WE had accomplished our pilgrimage so far as Omar Khayyam was concerned, and had reached the goal of this portion of our travels ; but before us—distant only a day’s journey—lay Mashad, the Holy City of Persia. This is a metropolis which has grown up around the shrine of Imam Riza, and which, in the eyes of the faithful Shiite believer, is hallowed above all cities in the world after Mecca and Karbala. Every devout follower of this branch of the Moslem creed cherishes the pious hope of visiting Mashad at least once in his lifetime, and, above all, of being buried within sight of the sanctuary of the ever-living saint. The pilgrim who has made this journey wins the coveted title of ‘Mashadi,’ and we two roamers from the Western World now found this honorary degree, which is so prized in Persian eyes, within a day’s grasp, so that we hastened forward to gain the new distinction. I am not sure that our Armenian servant cared much for this dignity, for, being a Christian like ourselves, he would naturally be looked upon with a feeling of scorn, if not of hatred, in this fanatical hotbed of Islam.

On the first stage of our journey after leaving Nishapur, we came across a reminder of departed Zoroastrianism at Kadamgah, some sixteen miles to the east, where the seat of a former temple of the ‘Fire-worshipers’ has been supplanted by a Moslem shrine. This pretty green village, abounding in water, lies to the left of the main track, on the slope of a hillside ; and the sanctuary is located in the midst of a terraced garden, well

supplied with shade, some noble firs being especially noticeable,¹ as were the large plane trees around the caravansarai where we halted.

The settlement owes its name, *Kadam-gāh*, 'Place of the footprint,' to the mark of the feet of the revered Imam Riza, towards whose burial-place we were now journeying. The story goes that when this holy Moslem passed this spot, eleven centuries ago, on his way to Tus to preach the true creed to the non-believing Gabrs, there suddenly rolled forth from the fire-temple, where the sanctuary of Kadamgah now stands, a black stone that asked to be redeemed from the torments of damnation. Whereupon, the holy man stepped upon the stone, and, marvelous to relate, his footprints remained upon its surface to bear witness in future ages to his sanctity and his power. The Gabrs threw the stone into a well, it is said, to conceal it from view forever. In later days the saint appeared in a vision to Shah Abbas the Great and revealed to him the relic's hiding-place; and when it had been recovered, the monarch ordered a shrine to be erected on the spot. The vaulted dome of this fane today, with its turquoise tiles embellished by a girdling band of arabesque inscriptions, does honor still to the munificence of its royal patron as well as to the memory of the Imam.²

The journey proceeded with the usual halts for relays of fresh horses and time for taking notes, as at Hasanabad, near which stood two commanding fortlike structures of stone and mud, bearing the name of Ali (or Abbas) Kuli Khan. From Hasanabad we pursued our way by a winding and rolling road that

¹ Curzon, 1. 261, notes that these firs were said to be grown from cones brought, some four hundred years ago, by a pilgrim from the Himalayas; if so, they form a noble arboreal monument to the pious man's devotion. Khanikoff, 1. 95, observes that the gardens around the mosque of Kadamgah were constructed by order of Shah Sulaiman in 1091 A.H. (=1680 A.D.).

² See Eastwick, *Journal*, 2. 271-272; Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 259-260; Sykes, *Pilgrimage*, p. 132; and compare, for some notes on Kadamgah in 1807, Truilhier, pp. 267-268. For the picture of the shrine here reproduced, from Captain Watson's photograph, I am indebted, as stated above, to the courtesy of Major Sykes and Mr. Eustace Reynolds-Ball.

passed along valleys and over high hills, where our barometer registered five thousand feet at one point before reaching Fakhr Dāūd.¹ At last the busy hamlet of Sharifabad was reached, the approach being through fields of poppies, along streams of water, and past a fat graveyard. This station is the last halt before crossing the high ridge of Kuh-i Salam, 'the Hill of Salutation,' as the pilgrims call it, which shuts off Mashad from the impatient view of the travel-worn devotee.

Broad is the path, and rocky is the way, I might add, that leads over this lofty Salamat height; and many is the pious wayfarer that sinks beneath the task of its toilsome ascent before the summit is reached and his sight rewarded by a glimpse of the golden dome of promise. 'Ya Ali! Ya Husain! Ya Imam Riza!' he cries out with glad heart, for his eyes have beheld at last the blessed city, and he falls upon his knees in prayer and thanksgiving to Allah for having vouchsafed him the divine privilege. 'May your prayers be heard,' responds the leader of a band of pilgrims that are now returning from their sacred march, with banner unfurled to show that they have kissed the bars that guard the saint's tomb; while some of the party stop to heap up a pile of stones to rival the mass of their accrued merit, or others tear off a rag from their tattered garments to leave as a souvenir of the journey, or to serve as a talisman for their safe home-coming.²

The long and tortuous descent on the other side of the ridge we made at quickened pace, with the glittering dome of the shrine, the gold-embossed minarets of its porches, and the blue-tiled façades of the memorial mosques forming ever a cynosure for our course against the dark mountain background to the north. We pressed forward in haste to reach the city early in the afternoon, and before long were making a circuit to the

¹ Query. Is this height the same as 'Mount Dāūd in Khuzistān' mentioned in Bd. 12. 29, 30? Others transcribe the Pahlavi name as Dāvad.

² On the underlying motives of rag offerings see Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-Lore of Northern India*, 2 ed., 1. 161-164, Westminster, 1896.

left beneath its tower-flanked walls, crossing a narrow bridge over the dry moat to enter one of the town's seven gates, on either side of which a couple of ragged soldiers stood watch, while the gaudy tilework on the columns that crowned the portal gleamed bright in the beaming sunlight. A short drive along the main avenue of the city, and one or two winding turns in addition, brought our vehicle into the grounds of the British Consulate, where a hearty welcome was extended by Major P. M. Sykes and his hospitable wife, who joined in making our stay at Mashad one of the pleasantest memories of our entire journey.

Mashad has been so often and so well described that it would be impossible for a brief sojourner to add anything of value to what has already been written on the subject. Lord Curzon, with consummate art, skimmed the best cream from the accounts by his predecessors, especially Fraser, Eastwick, Khanikoff, and Vámbéry (correcting at the same time certain errors that had crept into previous reports), and himself was able to contribute much to a better understanding of the city and its history.¹ Colonel Yate, from a special knowledge of local conditions and Oriental sources, was in a position to offer still further material, not formerly accessible;² while Major Sykes, from his residence for a number of years at Mashad in an official capacity, as well as from a thorough acquaintance with Persian affairs, has been able to give a vivid picture of the town and a particularly accurate description of its celebrated sanctuary, in portraying which he had the help of an Oriental collaborator, as no Christian can now enter the sacred precinct except at the risk of being mobbed.³ Finally, to the pen of his

¹ Consult the exhaustive chapter by Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 148-176.

² See the two chapters on the history of Mashad and its shrine, Yate, *Khurasan*, pp. 313-346.

³ This valuable presentation is published in two different places, see

Sykes, *Historical Notes on Khurasan*, in *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1129-1148, and the same author's *Glory of the Shia World* (assisted by Khan Bahadur Ahmad Din Khan), pp. 233-257, London and N.Y., 1910. Cf. von Schweinitz, *Orient. Wanderungen*, pp. 15-80, Berlin, 1910.

talented sister, Miss Ella C. Sykes, we owe a sketch of the life of the people and their surroundings in this holy city of the Eighth Imam.¹ Still, I may be allowed to venture upon a short account of Mashad as a phase in our journey, to accompany the photographs which I collected while I was there.

Mashad, which is now a town of perhaps sixty thousand inhabitants, and the capital of the province of Khurasan, is a city that has literally grown up around the tomb of Imam Riza within the last thousand years, and has entirely supplanted Tus, the ancient capital, which, as will be described in the next chapter, now lies in ruins some fifteen miles to the northwest, having never recovered from the Mongol ravages in the thirteenth century. It is a city visited annually by thousands of pilgrims, who form the chief source of its revenue, and who are attracted to it by the sanctity of the tomb of Riza, the eighth of the twelve Imams in line of succession after Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law Ali, whose particular followers the Persians, as Shiites, are.²

Ali ar-Riza, son of the Imam Musa, was born in the year 770 A.D., and, on the death of his father, succeeded, at the age of thirty, to the office of Imam. This was under the caliphate of the renowned Harun ar-Rashid, near whose dust his body now reposes in the famous shrine. When that great caliph died in 809, his son Mamun, the next caliph, is said to have shown marked honors to Imam Riza, who visited him at Merv, by giving him his daughter in marriage and by appointing him to be his heir. But the story goes on to say that, having become jealous of the pious man, Mamun compassed his death by administering poison to him in a bunch of grapes, the golden dish on which the fatal fruit was handed being still preserved, it is claimed, and set in the wall of the shrine as a record of

¹ See Ella C. Sykes, *Persia and its People*, pp. 88-105, London and New York, 1910.

² On the Shiite sub-sects connected with Riza — the *Kata'iyas* ('those who

cut off') and the *Rānā'ashariyas* ('twelvers') — see Shahrastani, *Religionsparteien und Philosophenschulen*, tr. Haarbrücker, 1. 25, 192-199, Halle, 1850.

Mamun's iniquity.¹ The date when this foul deed was committed was the year 201 A.H. (817 A.D.), and the saint died at the village of Sanabad (since absorbed in Mashad) in the district of Tus.² By a somewhat strange anomaly, considering the story of the murder, though possibly to avoid suspicion, and especially because it was his own prediction, his body was buried close by that of the illustrious Harun ar-Rashid in the mausoleum which the hated son Mamun had erected to the great caliph's memory.³

Local legend even ascribes to Alexander the Great, who actually had been at Tus more than a thousand years before, a prophecy that this spot in the environs of that ancient city would one day be the burial-place of a famous man.⁴ Passing

¹ See Sykes, *Glory of the Shia World*, pp. 249-250; and Miss Sykes, *Persia*, p. 95.

² According to al-Biruni (*Chronology of Ancient Nations*, tr. Sachau, p. 330, London, 1879), the day of Riza's death was Ramazan 21; or, according to a tradition to which less credence was evidently given, Dhu-'l-Ka'da 23 (i.e. either April 12 or June 12, 817 A.D.). The story that Imam Riza was poisoned by Mamun was recorded a few years after the event by Masudi (943), *Prairies d'or*, 7. 3, 60; cf. 6. 415 and 7. 101, who allows, however, that there was some doubt regarding the truth of it. He gives the date of Riza's death as 4 Jamadi I, 193 A.H. (= Feb. 23, 809 A.D.), and says that he was 49 years and 6 months of age, or, according to others, 63 years old.

³ This is implied in the remark of Kazvini (1275 A.D.), quoted by Le Strange, p. 300, to the effect that both bodies lay under the same dome, and that Mamun caused the two graves to be made exactly alike, see below, p. 268, n. 4. According to one account

both bodies were interred in an old tower, originally built by the 'Fire-worshippers,' see Bassett, *Land of the Imams*, pp. 222-223. The Dabistan, a seventeenth century Persian treatise (tr. Shea and Troyer, 1. 48, Paris, 1843), also records a tradition that 'the mausoleum of Imam Reza in Sanabad of Tus' was originally a 'fire temple.' The whole circumstances of Riza's death through Mamun's perfidy are vividly told by Fraser, pp. 449-451, from an account repeated to him by the chief priest of the shrine, although he draws attention to certain discrepancies in the reports of other authorities. The account adds that the Imam is stated to have said, 'the caliph Haroom charged his son to bury him in such a manner that his body might face mine'; and in accordance with the directions given, 'the feet of the Imaum were placed towards the head of the caliph, and both were within the four walls built by Secunder Roomee [Alexander the Great].'

⁴ The legend about Alexander's alleged prophecy is given by Fraser, p. 449.



MUHAMMAD THE PROPHET
 (From a picture in the Sacred Precinct at Meahed)



**IDEALIZED NATIVE PORTRAIT OF THE PROPHET
 MUHAMMAD IN HIS YOUTH**



THE GREAT SHRINE OF IMAM RIZA



ENTRANCE TO THE SHRINE OF IMAM RIZA

over such idle tales, we know that Imam Riza's grave (perhaps benefiting originally from its position by the side of Harun ar-Rashid) soon became a place of pilgrimage, and was certainly the cause of the settlement that grew up about the humble village of Sanabad, the place being called *mash-had*, 'the place of martyrdom,' which became Mashad (more accurately spelled Mash-had).¹

Already in the tenth century we have at least three kindred references to it in connection with the ancient city of Tus and the dependent four borough towns or districts that made up the greater metropolis. Thus, the literary writer Mis'ar Muhalhil (about 941 A.D.) writes: —

'Tus is made up of the union of four towns, two of which are large and the other two of minor importance; its area is a square mile. It has beautiful monuments that date from the time of Islam, such as the house of Hamid, son of Kahtabah, the tomb of Ali, son of Musa, and that of Rashid in the environs (lit. gardens) of the town.'²

Istakhri (951 A.D.) has the same in substance: —

'Taking Tus as a dependency of the province of Nishapur, its towns are Radkan, Tabaran, Bazdghur, and Naukan, in which [latter] is the tomb of Ali, son of Musa ar-Riza (may the peace of God be upon him!), and the tomb of Harun ar-Rashid. . . . The tomb of Riza is about one quarter of a farsakh distant towards the village called Sanabadh.'³

Ibn Haukal (978 A.D.) repeats the statement of his predecessor, with the slight variation that he defines the position of Riza's tomb more precisely as located

'within sight of the town of Naukan, in the neighborhood of the tomb of Harun ar-Rashid at the holy mash-had, in the village of Sana-

¹ Though the village of Sanabad (Sanābādh) no longer exists, having been absorbed by the town of Mashad, its name survives in that of an underground canal which supplies water to Sarab, the northwest quarter of Mashad; see Yate, p. 316; Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1130.

² This statement is quoted by Yakut (1220), tr. Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 396.

³ Istakhri, ed. De Goeje, 1. 257–258. Compare in this connection Yate, *Khurasan*, pp. 314–315, and the briefer quotation from Ibn Haukal in Ouseley, *Oriental Geography*, p. 215.

badh, and a strong and high edifice stands over it (i.e. over the tomb); the people are zealots regarding this mashhad (place of martyrdom).'¹

About the same time Mukaddasi (985) mentions a mosque here, of which he says, 'there is none finer in all Khurasan'; and it may be added that this mosque, though in a dilapidated condition, is still standing in Mashad.²

Towards the end of this century or in the beginning of the eleventh century, Mahmud of Ghaznah, 'Allah-breathing lord,' ordered that additions be made to the shrine, in consequence of a dream which he had, and that a wall be thrown around the precinct.³ In 1154 A.D. the tomb is again mentioned, though incidentally, by Idrisi; while Yakut (about the year 1216), who had quoted the earlier Muhalhil, as above, also speaks of the grave, together with the sepulchre of Harun, as in the environs of Tus, showing that Mashad had not yet come into real prominence.⁴ But the destruction of Tus followed directly afterwards through the Mongol invasion in 1220; and a century and a half later it was turned into a desert. By this time Mashad had come to the forefront and supplanted the ancient capital.

Mustaufi, writing in 1340, speaks of the town, which was now well developed, under its name Mashad; and a few years later, Ibn Batutah (1355) described it as a large city, with markets plentifully supplied, and he gave a somewhat detailed

¹ Ibn Haukal, ed. De Goeje, 2. 313-314. Compare also Yate, pp. 314-315.

² See Mukaddasi, ed. De Goeje, 3. 319, and compare Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, p. 389; Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1130.

³ Cf. Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1130.

⁴ Idrisi, tr. Jaubert, *Géographie d'Édrisi*, 2. 184; Yakut, tr. Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 396. Yakut's designation for the environs of Tus is 'the gardens of the city.' Kazvini (1275 A.D., cited by Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, p. 390)

noted that the remains of the Caliph and the Imam lay under the same dome, and that Mamun made both graves alike, so that the Shiabs did not know which one to revere. The distinction, however, seems to have been preserved, for today only Riza's sepulchre is kept up, and Harun ar-Rashid's is no longer marked. The fact that Harun and Riza were buried side by side is recorded likewise by Zaidar, *Umayyads and Abbāsids*, tr. Margoliouth, p. 195, London, 1907 (Gibb Memorial Series, vol. 4).



PORTAL OF QUEEN GAUHAR SHAD'S BEAUTIFUL MOSQUE



COURTYARD AND BASE SANCTUARY OF IMAM RIZA'S SHRINE
(Nadir Shah's Fountain to the foreground)



PORTAL LEADING FROM THE GREAT COURT OF THE SHRINE
 INTO THE LOWER KHABAN
 (The Dargah tower surmounts the structure)



THE GREAT GRAVEYARD AROUND THE SHRINE

account of the highly ornate shrine, with its splendid dome, beneath which the Caliph and the Imam lay buried.¹ The comment which Batutah adds on the hatred cherished by the Shiah against Harun, as the father of Mamun, is interesting, for he says, 'Every Shiah, on entering the shrine, kicks with his foot the tomb of Harun ar-Rashid, while he invokes a blessing on that of Imam Riza'; and the same anathemas are repeated today, the curse being augmented by the words, 'Let it be more.'²

In the fifteenth century we know from the Spanish ambassador Clavijo, envoy from the Castilian court to the capital of Tamerlane at Samarkand in 1404, that pilgrims thronged Mashad; and, furthermore, that he himself was granted the privilege (not accorded today) of visiting the shrine, for he writes, 'Imam Riza lies buried in a great mosque in a large tomb which is covered with silver gilt,' and he adds, 'the ambassadors went to see the mosque, and afterwards, when in other lands people heard them say they had been to his tomb, they kissed their clothes, saying that they had been near the holy Horazan [*i.e.* the shrine in Khurasan].'³ In the same century, Shah Rukh, the youngest son of Tamerlane, made princely gifts to the mausoleum in 1418; and in that year was completed the beautiful shrine of Gauhar Shad, which adjoins it, and which received its appellation from the name of his queen who founded it.⁴

The Safavid dynasty, in the sixteenth century, appear to

¹ Ibn Batutah, *Voyage*, ed. and tr. Defrémery and Sanguinetti, 3. 77-79, Paris, 1874-1879; compare Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, p. 390, and Curzon, 1. 149, n. 2.

² Cf. Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1145.

³ See Markham, *The Narrative of the Embassy of Clavijo*, p. 110, London, 1859 (Hakluyt Society). Clavijo (*op. cit.* p. 109) reached Mashad on Wednesday, July 30, 1404.

⁴ See Yate, p. 317, and Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1145-1148. The date of the gifts presented by Shah Rukh in 1405, as given by Sykes, *op. cit.* p. 1132, may refer to an earlier donation by the monarch. Horn, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 578, implies that Shah Rukh built the mosque.

have done much to advance the prosperity of Mashad and the beauty of the shrine, perhaps having some national and business pride in making it a Persian rival to the Arabian Mecca, or to the shrine of Husain at Karbala (near Baghdad) and to the burial-place of Ali at Najaf, all of which lay beyond the boundaries of their kingdom and carried the pilgrim-pence out of the realm.¹ But the century was a troubled one, marked by the savage inroads of the Transoxianian Uzbeks, until peace finally came under Shah Abbas, who, in 1601, showed his veneration for the sanctuary by making the pilgrimage on foot to Mashad all the way from Isfahan.

During the following two centuries the fortunes of the city varied, often suffering from raid, rebellion, or siege (especially when the invading Sunnite foes wreaked the vengeance of two-fold hatred upon this stronghold of the Shiite sect), until the Kajar dynasty, beginning over a hundred years ago, brought the whole country under the rule which at present prevails.²

In area the city covers an expanse of nearly two miles in length and half that distance in breadth, comprising a circuit of possibly six miles, divided into a half dozen sections with minor wards.³ It is transected from northwest to southeast by the one large avenue of the town—and the main artery of business—the Khiaban, which runs its entire length, broken only by the great quadrilateral enclosing the sacred buildings. Some twenty-five yards wide, the street is bordered at intervals by trees, and down its middle runs a broad watercourse (crossed by rickety wooden bridges), which serves as an aqueduct for the city's supply, and equally, it would seem, as a *cloaca maxima*

¹ The Safavid ruler Shah Tahmasp I, for example, showed a special interest in the shrine, making a pilgrimage to it in 1533, enriching it with gifts, and beautifying the outer court; see Horn, *Denkwürdigkeiten Schāh Tahmāsp's des Ersten*, pp. 38, 48, 64, Strassburg, 1891 (interest in the shrine); Fraser, *Narrative*, p. 453

(gifts and additions); Nasir ad-Din Shah, *Diary*, p. 190 (burial-place).

² Mashad has, it may be noted, been either the birthplace or the residence of a number of the minor lights of Persia (see Ethé, in *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, 2. 215, 254, 293, 308-309, 312, 336).

³ Cf. Yate, pp. 327-328.

for the public drainage. The course of the Khiaban is interrupted, about two thirds of the way from the upper end, by the huge enceinte that walls in the shrine, the more northerly portion of the thoroughfare being called the 'Upper Khiaban,' and the lower being known as the 'Lower Khiaban.' Direct transit from one end to the other is possible only for Muhammadans because of the intervening precinct.

This sacred enclosure, covering an area about a quarter of a mile square, forms the very heart of the city, and is a sort of town within a town.¹ The surrounding wall is sufficient to forbid entrance at any point except at the arched gateway through either end; and even here a chain shuts off ingress for every one not of the Mussulman creed; nor does any one of the faithful, including the Shah himself, dare profane the consecrated ground by advancing otherwise than humbly on foot. This dividing barrier converts the court of the sanctuary into a *bast* (literally 'bound fast'), or an asylum of safety as inviolable as the 'cities of refuge' in the Bible or the 'horns of the altar' of the Temple; so that here even the worst criminals and malefactors find a secure retreat from punishment for their guilt, unless, in exceptional cases, the college of priests adjudges some penalty for their misdeeds. If provided with money, these offenders may live with the same comfort as the pilgrims themselves, because within the precinct there are shops well supplied with the necessaries and even comforts of life; and many tales are told of egregious wrong-doers who have thus been able to escape the hand of justice for a protracted period, and who have later made good terms of compromise with the plaintiffs in the case.²

Although admission within the bounds of the sacred *temenos*

¹ Cf. Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 104; Miss Sykes, *Persia*, p. 91.

² On the religious principles underlying the widespread right of sanctuary see Westermarck's article 'Asylum,' in Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion*

and *Ethics*, 2. 161-164, Edinburgh, 1909, which may be supplemented by Post, *Grundriss der ethnologischen Jurisprudenz*, 2. 252-256, Oldenburg, 1895.

is absolutely prohibited to all non-believers in Islam, there have been, during the past century, a few Europeans who were fortunate enough to gain entrance —and while in Mashad we heard a rumor that another in disguise had at least slipped into the outer court —so that from their accounts, supplemented by detailed descriptions given by Muhammedans themselves, and aided by photographs of the shrine and its surrounding building, we are able to form a good idea of the grand parallelogram as a whole.¹

The main entrance is on the northeasterly side, which the Khiaban here traverses, and ingress is had through the Portal of Shah Abbas II into the grand enclosure known as the Old Court.² The pavement of this court is composed of slabs of dark stones, under which lies the dust of thousands of devout Muhammedans, while conspicuous in the center is a fountain dedicated by Nadir Shah, and opposite rises the handsomest of the four tile-adorned porticos, the Golden Porch of Nadir, striking because of its lofty minaret overlaid with gold, and rivaling its towering mate on the Portal of Shah Abbas.³

Behind the Golden Porch rises the magnificent dome of the Shrine, lifting its noble head covered with plates of copper encrusted with gold, and made still more gorgeous by a double

¹ Detailed plans of the enclosure are given by Yate, *Khurasan*, p. 332; Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1129, and the same author's *Glory of the Shia World*, p. 102. For the names of the European travelers who are known to have visited the shrine in the nineteenth century, see Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 160-161.

² It is worth noting that a large European chime-clock, a gift due to English munificence, looks down from the main portico in this court; and Russian enterprise has introduced electric light into the building of the shrine.

³ Nadir Shah, the great conqueror in the eighteenth century, did much to beautify the shrine, and was buried at Mashad; but the eunuch monarch, Agha Muhammad Shah, out of revenge for having been mutilated by him, caused his body to be dug up, the grave despoiled, and the bones transferred to Teheran and buried under the doorsill of the palace that he might have the grim pleasure of tramping over them daily in passing in and out. See Fraser, p. 462; Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, 3. 71-72, London, 1835; Curzon, 1. 165.



THE TOMB-CHAMBER OF SAINT RIZA

.....



row of inscriptions in letters of gold and blue. Beneath its vaulted dome, which is believed to be the very dome under which Harun ar-Rashid was buried, even though no trace of his sepulchre is seen above ground today, is the tomb-chamber (*haram*) in which lie the remains of Imam Riza.¹ The pilgrims catch sight of it first through a silver grating before reaching the chamber itself, with its sumptuous doors of gold and silver; and, on entering the sanctum, they find themselves in a richly adorned room, embellished with jewels, gold, and tapestry, while the sepulchre itself is protected by triple gratings, two of which consist of steel bars, while the third is made of brass overlaid with gold. After prostrating themselves, as a mark of reverence, the devotees circumambulate the tomb, kissing the lock and grating that guard it, repeating a prayer and a benediction upon the saint's memory, and not forgetting to utter a curse upon Harun and his wicked son, Mamun. But for those who desire fuller details on this subject, I may best refer to the interesting accounts written by our host, Major Sykes, who enjoyed the advantage of having first-hand information from his Oriental collaborator, Khan Bahadur Ahmad Khan, attaché to the British Consulate at Mashad.²

Behind the shrine is another handsome court, that of the beautiful Mosque of Gauhar Shad, already referred to as founded by Shah Rukh's pious queen, and a small masjid which that liberal benefactress generously built to commemorate the stubborn zeal of an old woman who held out for a long time against selling the queen her land. Besides these there are two caravansarais for the pilgrims, including even a public kitchen, several madrasahs for the students and priests, and yet another quadrangle, the New Court (less imposing than the Old), on

¹ Compare the note on Kazvini (1275 A.D.) above, p. 268, n. 4, and see Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, pp. 1143-1144. The photograph, which I purchased from a native of Mashad, will

give some idea of the interior of the chamber.

² See Sykes, *Glory of the Shia World*, pp. 243-247, and the same author in *JRAS.* 1910, pp. 1132-1143.

the southern side of the great compound.¹ Nor must mention fail to be made of a portico that leads into the section of the Lower Khiaban which is enclosed within the precinct and near the New Court; for on its top is the *Naḳāra Khānah*, or 'Music House,' from whose balconied height the kettle-drum and trumpet sound forth the arrival and departure of the sun with as discordant a noise as the wild fanfare which hailed the king's triumphant pledge in Hamlet.²

The whole available space around the shrine is one huge graveyard, every unoccupied foot of the sacred ground being devoted to the interment of the dead. This adds a rich source of income to the sanctuary in addition to all the other channels of revenue. High prices are paid for the cherished privilege of being buried somewhere near the dust of the saint; and corpse-caravans accordingly make a regular business of transporting bodies—sometimes from a great distance—to be interred in the hallowed soil. Not less busy are the grave-diggers and stone-cutters, whose services are constantly in demand; for no sooner has an old grave caved in or its flat stone slab become worn out, than a new tenant is assigned the place and a fresh inscription is carved. O'Donovan gave a graphic, though nauseating, account of his experiences, one hot summer day in 1880, when visiting this teeming field of the dead.³ Only the healthful climate of Mashad, for its water in general is poor, prevents the city from being decimated by plagues.

If we leave out of account the buildings within the precinct of the shrine, there is not a single edifice in Mashad that is

¹ For a photograph of the New Court see Yate, p. 342; and for a comment on it as inferior to the other courts compare Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1145. Yate, pp. 345–346, adds a list of books found in the library of the shrine.

² This custom of saluting the rising and the setting sun prevails in a num-

ber of other cities in Persia, and is supposed to be a survival of ancient Persian sun-worship, though I am inclined to believe (as stated in *Persia, Past and Present*, pp. 104, 267) that it has nothing more to do with the antique faith than has a sunset gun or a curfew bell.

³ O'Donovan, *Merv Oasis*, 1. 490.

worthy of special mention. The Ark, or 'Citadel,'¹ which serves as the official residence of the Prince Governor (to whom I had the honor of paying a visit), is located in the southwestern portion of the city, defended by low walls and furnished with a parade-ground for troops, but there is nothing remarkable or unusual about it to call for a detailed description.²

As a city, in fact, Mashad offers little that is attractive. If one ascends, for example, the roof of the Imperial Bank in order to have a view of the shrine of Imam Riza and the edifices within its bounds, one is struck by the general flatness of the town; though the level stretch of housetops is occasionally broken by *bād-gīrs*, or 'wind towers,' that give air and ventilation to the porticoed homes of the wealthier class, in whose courtyards and gardens fine trees are found.³ Most of the streets leading from the main avenue of the Khiaban, however, have no shade, and are mere alleys and lanes. The ordinary houses are built of mud, and are often somewhat below the level of the road, since their owners have dug up the clay of the street to serve as building-material for their humble abodes; and more than once we had to turn aside to find a passage elsewhere when the road was thus turned up.

Not a great deal need be said about the bazars of the city, the chief of which are reported to be within the *bast* enclosure, and are consequently inaccessible to Europeans. A motley Asiatic throng frequents these marts, and a considerable business is

¹ Memoranda regarding the Ark will be found in Fraser, pp. 460-462; Eastwick, 2. 204-205; Curzon, 1. 168.

² In the environs of Mashad, however, about two miles north of the city, there is a domed building, the Shrine of Khvaja Rabi, situated amid attractive gardens and bearing inscriptions of historic interest. Khvaja Rabi, who was interred in this mausoleum, was a contemporary of Ali, in the seventh century A.D. He was sent

by Ali in command of an army to spread Islam in Khurasan, but died there and was buried on the site now marked by the mausoleum, though the present building owes its completion to Shah Abbas the Great in 1621. See Fraser, pp. 520-521; Eastwick, 2. 200-201; Yate, pp. 338-340; Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1029.

³ On the *bād-gīrs*, which are common in southeastern Persia, and especially at Yazd, see my *Persia*, p. 349.

carried on, especially because of the never-ceasing influx of pilgrims to the town.¹ One of the most remarkable features of Mashad life, a usage that has called forth comments on many sides, is the established custom of providing temporary wives for the pilgrims during their sojourn in the city. A marriage bond, duly ratified and sealed by a priest, is entered into for a week, or a month, or as long as the visitor wishes to stay ; and, on his departure, the wife of this brief period, duly provided with a dowry, though it may be slight indeed, is freed from her marital obligations, and is at liberty, I believe, to enter later into another union if she finds it to her advantage.²

There are, nevertheless, notable signs of progress at Mashad. The voice of the Nationalistic Movement has been heard here, as elsewhere, in clear and ringing tones ; and advanced leaders, clerics among them, are found ready to promote causes that tend towards the general uplift. Nor is Mashad backward in a desire to further military interests, for the commander of the forces of Khurasan, such as they are, has his headquarters in the city. The *Kār-guzār*, or 'Minister of Official Business,' upon whom I called to inquire about some historic and antiquarian topics relating to Khurasan, proved to be no mere functionary, but an intelligent man, well informed, and ready to give from his store of wide knowledge ; he had, besides, a keen sense of humor, and his jovial conversation, good coffee, and tobacco served as an appropriate prelude to the formal visit to the Prince Governor, who had kindly

¹ See Miss Sykes, *Persia*, pp. 99-100 ; Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 166-167.

² Dr. Gray calls my attention to the fact that a like custom prevails at Mecca (cf. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka*, 2. 5, 109-112, The Hague, 1889), and the whole Muhammadan institution is probably of primitive Arab origin (cf. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Hist.* 14. 4); while in Sunan (in South Arabia) and in Abyssinia temporary marriages for

a stipulated time are common (see the literature cited by Barton, *Sketch of Semitic Origins*, pp. 47-49, New York, 1902). This type of marriage is found not only among the Semites, but also among American Indians, Africans, Oceanians, Siamese, Japanese, and even ancient Teutons (see the references given by Post, *Grundriss der ethnologischen Jurisprudenz*, 1. 53-54, Oldenburg, 1894).



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF MASHAD



A GATHERING IN THE GARDEN OF THE ARK, OR CITADEL
 (1. The Commander of the Army. 2. The Karguzer.)



A GROUP OF PARLIAMENTARIANS AT MASHAD



THE CHIEF MULLAH AND PRIESTLY OFFICIALS OF THE SHRINE

assembled some of the local scholars to impart information on archaeological subjects in which I was interested.

Social visits, informal gatherings, some athletic sports, and two dinner parties added to the pleasure of our stay ; and on the last evening Major Sykes announced that he had secured for us horses, mules, guides, servants, provisions, and tents for the camping tour on which he was to accompany us the next two days for a visit to the ruins of ancient Tus, the home of the epic poet Firdausi, and one of the most famous cities in the history of Iran.

CHAPTER XXI

RUINED TUS, THE HOME OF THE POET FIRDAUSI

'Last night by ruined Tus I chanced to go,
An owl sat perched where once the cock did crow.

I asked, "What message from this waste bring'st Thou?"

It said, "The message is, Woe, woe, all's woe!"

—SHAHID OF BALKH, *On the Ruins of Tus*.

LONG had it been a desire of my heart to visit Tus, the ancient home of the poet Firdausi, for though its chronicled tale may not be known to every reader, the glamour of a mighty past and the atmosphere of poetry cling about it still. The name is as old as the half-legendary warrior Tusa in the Avesta, with his battles against Turan; and Alexander the Great passed through it in pursuit of Bessus, the slayer of the last Darius. Abundant evidences of its pristine glory remained during all the ages of the Sasanian Empire; and the Arabs counted its conquest among the triumphs of their victories in Iran. But finally the Mongols crushed it, never to rise again from the dust in which it lies today.¹

¹ Tus derived its name from Tusa, the cherished hero of early Iran, in the tenth and ninth century B.C., under the reign of the semi-historical kings Kai Kaus and Kai Khusrau, of the Kaianian dynasty (see Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, p. 322, and on the relation of the form of the name Tūs to Av. Tusa (*Taosa) cf. Nöldeke, *Persische Studien*, 2. 28). According to the Avesta (Yt. 5. 53, 54, 58, and cf. Geiger, *Ostiranische Kultur*, pp. 194, 198, 478), 'the gallant warrior Tusa' was famous for his victory over the Hunus of Vaesaka, early representa-

tives of the White Huns, so famous in later history. Folk-legend held, according to the Pahlavi texts, that this son of Naotara, or Naudar, will be one of those that will appear again at the coming of Soshans, the Savior, and aid in bringing about the regeneration of the world at the time of the Resurrection (cf. Bd. 29. 6; Dāt. 36. 3; Dk. 9. 23.2 and 6; also the *Pazand Jamaspji*, tr. Modi, p. 119, Bombay, 1903). Throughout Iranian literature the campaigns of this hero play an important, if not always successful, part, in connection with the wars of the two Kai-

The fame of Tus remains undying through the renown of its poet Firdausi, the author of Persia's great national epic, who first

anian monarchs mentioned above; see, for example, Firdausi, *Shāh Nāmah*, tr. Mohl, 2. 472-562; 3. 2-215, 333; Tha'alibi, *Histoire des rois des Perses*, tr. Zotenberg, pp. 125, 130-138, 156-246; Mirkhond, *History of the Early Kings of Persia*, tr. Shea, pp. 224, 232-233, 242, 247-252, London, 1882. Firdausi (2. 483, 487-493, and often) calls him the *Sipah-dār*, 'Commander of an army'; and the same title, under the form *Sipāh-pat*, is used of him in connection with the founding of the city of Tus when mentioned in the Pahlavi list of the 'Cities of Iran,' § 14 (tr. Modi, pp. 65, 145, 177; tr. Blochet, pp. 165, 168, 172); this Pahlavi work also implies that the office of 'Sipah-pat remained for nine hundred years' in his family; and even today the commander-in-chief of the forces of Khurasan has his headquarters at Mashad, as successor of the ancient city of Tus, as noted above. According to Masudi, *Prairies*, 4. 73, Shahrastani, *Kitāb al-Milāl*, tr. Haarbrücker, 1. 298, and the Dabistan, tr. Shea and Troyer, 1. 52, Tus founded his city on the site of a fire-temple originally built by Faridun; the circumstances that led to the foundation are mentioned in the Persian preface to Macan's *Shāhnāma*, p. 32, cited by Modi, *Shatrōihā-i Airān*, p. 145.

The importance of the city may have drawn Alexander to it when he led his troops from Hyrcania through the valley of the Kashaf River while in pursuit of Bessus (as noted above), for Tus, or Tusa, is certainly the place to which Arrian (3. 25. 1) alludes, though erroneously spelt in the texts as Ζουσα (Greek T being mistaken for Z, or so written under the influence of

the familiar name of Susa, Ζουσα); for the identification see Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders*, p. 282, n. 4; Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, 2. 65; Chinnock, *Arrian's Anabasis Translated*, p. 176, n. 1; Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1114.

In addition to the Pahlavi references already given in regard to Tus as founder of the city, there is another reference to it as a town or province in Bd. 12. 24; 20. 30, thus showing its position during the Sasanian period. According to Firdausi (*Shāh Nāmah*, tr. Mohl, 5. 415-419; cf. also Justi, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 526), Yazdargad I was killed in 420 A.D. by the kick of a horse at Lake Sab (Chashmah-i Sabz) near Tus. (Cf. p. 212, note 1, and Sykes, *Geog. Journal*, 37. 3-4.) From sources other than Iranian we know that under the Zoroastrian sway of the Sasanians the city of Tus shared with Nishapur (p. 250 above) the distinction of being the seat of a Nestorian Christian bishop. See Guidi, *Ostsyrische Bischöfe*, in *ZDMG.* 43. 396, 398, 400, 406; Marquart, *Ērān-shahr*, pp. 66, 75; Labourt, *Le Christianisme sous la dynastie sassanide*, p. 120, Paris, 1904; and cf. Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1118.

When the Arab conquest of Persia came, Tus fell before the invaders, as did the other cities of Khurasan in the year 650 (81 A.H.); see Tabari, *Chronique, la version persane de Bel'amī*, tr. Zotenberg, 3. 571, Paris, 1867-1874. Details regarding the city and its topographical features down to Firdausi's time are found in the Arab-Persian geographers mentioned in the present chapter and the preceding one; see also Le Strange, *Eastern*

saw the light of day in this city, about 985 A.D., and who died at an advanced age in his birthplace, about the year 1025 A.D. His was a life full of joy and of sorrow, of proud successes and of cruel wrongs ; but though he drained bitter dregs at the close of his long career, he left behind him a masterpiece of poetic composition, for the *Shāh Nāmāh*, or 'Book of Kings,' is accounted one of the few great epics of the world.

Blood of old Iranian stock flowed in the veins of this poet of the 'Garden,' or of 'Paradise,' as his name implies, for he was sprung from the landed gentry of Tus, the early capital of Khurasan. This province was the chief center that kept alive the national patriotism of Iran after the pall of the Arab sway had been flung over it, marking the death of the old Zoroastrian religion and shrouding the glorious past of the country in gloom for nearly three hundred years. Out of this brooding shadow soared the spirit of Firdausi to illumine, by his gift of heroic verse, the annals of bygone days, chronicling the deeds of valor that formerly had made his country great, and raising to life again, for all time, the dead heroes of ancient Iran.

Strongly tinctured with the feeling of racial pride, he conceived in early life the spirited idea of recalling to the memory of the Persians their greatness in the ages that were falling into oblivion. Dakiki, his predecessor in heroic song, had first undertaken the task, but had met death through the dagger of a treacherous Turkoman minion before he had sung a thousand verses, murdered, as some have said, because he had shown too great sympathy for the old fire-worshiping faith of Persia to suit the views of orthodox Islam. Be that as it may, the field was now clear for Firdausi to take up the epic theme ; and he himself tells how the shade of the dead Dakiki appeared to him in a vision and encouraged him to carry on the work. The thousand verses which had been composed on the subject

Caliphate, p. 339. The Mongol ravages began in 1220 A.D. with the irruption of the armies of Chingiz Khan,

and nothing but dust was left after Tamerlane's son, Miran Shah, had swept over it in 1389.

of the Prophet Zardusht and the beginning of the Zoroastrian religion Firdausi incorporated bodily into his *Shah Namah*, with due acknowledgments to his ill-starred predecessor, his gratitude perhaps being combined with a sense of caution, for he thus avoided the responsibility of dealing personally with the delicate subject of the older faith.¹

Filled with enthusiasm and inspired by his inborn qualifications for the task, he pursued the labor of love, having already made thorough preparations for his work by a careful study of the Pahlavi prose sources from which the material of his poetic chronicle is drawn.² From personal passages that creep into his verse we know that Firdausi was not far from forty years of age when he made the real beginning of his monumental work; and in the course of the epic we learn of his deep grief for the death of a son, whose loss is mourned in touching strains, while from other sources we know that a devoted daughter survived him.

Desirous of finding a patron for his composition as it advanced, he was drawn to the court of Mahmud of Ghaznah, in Afghanistan, who ruled from 998 to 1030, and there he found a monarch so bounteous in gifts at first that Firdausi glorified his generosity in a glowing panegyric, only to be later revoked, although the poem in its final form still commemorates Mahmud's name. The story goes that the bard from Tus won entrance into the literary circle of poets that made up the round table at the court of Ghaznah by a clever piece of impromptu versification. Three of the minstrels nearest the throne composed each a verse ending in a different, though similar, word, for which no other rhyme was supposed to exist in Persian—

¹ In support of the truth of Firdausi's tactful claim on this point, it may be said that such scholars as Nöldeke, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 148, and Warner, *Shāhnāma*, 5. 20-22, with others, agree that the thousand verses, purported to have been borrowed from

Dakiki, actually show a difference in style and manner from Firdausi's own method of composition.

² For data regarding the prose sources in Pahlavi, see Nöldeke, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 148-146.

or as difficult to match as *window, month, twelfth, or silver* in English¹—and called upon Firdausi to complete the poetic stanza off-hand. The anecdote records that Firdausi's ability was instantly—and most successfully—displayed, evoking admiration from his rival bards, who (though jealous) were obliged to hail him as a peer, so that he finally obtained admission to the king's presence and was intrusted with the task of completing the great epic.²

Although this story is now commonly regarded as wholly fictitious, it nevertheless shows the high esteem in which Firdausi's genius was held, and long he lived in the sunshine of the court, being promised a gold piece for each couplet of the epic he composed.³ The liberality of Mahmud called forth a splendid eulogy in verse, which has already been referred to; but it was retracted later in the scathing satire that the poet

¹ The only rhyme for *silver* in English, I believe, is *chilver*, a provincial word for a ewe lamb.

² The difficult Persian rhyme-words ending in *-shan*, proposed to the newcomer by the established court-poets, Ansari, Asjadi, and Farrukhi, were respectively: *rūshan* ('bright'), *gulshan* ('rose-garden'), and *jūshan* ('cuirass'), to which Firdausi is said to have supplied the proper name *Pushan*, as rhyme, and then to have told the story of the combat of Pushan and Giv in spirited epic verse; cf. Pizzi, *Chrestomathie persane*, p. 135, Turin, 1889; Browne, *Biographies of Persian Poets*, in *JRAS.* 1900, p. 683 (p. 41 of the reprint); and his *Tadhkirat, or Memoirs of Dawlatshāh*, p. 51, London, 1901, this section tr. Vullers, *Fragmente über die Religion des Zoroaster, nebst dem Leben des Ferdusi*, pp. 3–7, Bonn, 1881. Browne, *Lit. Hist. Persia*, 2. 129, imitates the four rhyming lines of the Persian by translating as 'ocean, potion, lotion,

Poshan.' Nöldeke, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 153, n. 4, remarks that this interesting anecdote has no real authentic value. Instances of rhymecapping as a test of skill are familiar in other lands. Dr. Gray calls my attention to a good parallel in Sanskrit literature, in the pseudo-historic *Bhojaprabandha* (ed. Parab, 2 ed., p. 34, Bombay, 1904), where King Bhoja starts a verse, to which Bana and Maheśvara each contribute a rhyming line, while Kalidasa completes the quatrain. In a sense, though more distantly, the Firdausi story recalls the Latin quatrain, each verse beginning with *sic vos non vobis*, which Vergil alone could complete for Augustus, as recorded in the life of the poet by the pseudo-Donatus.

³ See my article on Firdausi in Warner, *World's Best Literature*, 10. 5735–5739, New York, 1897, from which I have here repeated a paragraph or two.

composed against his royal patron when disappointed, in his old age, of the reward that was to crown his work. Tradition says that Firdausi was a septuagenarian when he finished the last of the sixty thousand couplets that make up his 'Book of Kings'; and he now looked for the recompense of his twenty-five (or, according to other accounts, thirty, or thirty-five) years of labor. But jealousy had, meanwhile, sprung up at court, and subtle intrigue had not been idle during his long residence near Mahmud's throne. The Ghaznavid monarch was induced to send sixty thousand silver dirhams, instead of the same number of gold dinars, as a remuneration for the poem. Firdausi is said to have been in the bath when the elephant laden with the money bags arrived. On discovering the deception, the infuriated poet divided the money between the bath-attendant and the man who brought him a glass of sherbet, and then vented his spleen in the famous satire on Mahmud, after which he fled for his life. For ten years he was a wanderer, though meeting ultimately with a princely patron in Tabaristan, who sought to assuage his wrath against Mahmud, so that he expunged the savage lines written in derision of the unappreciative monarch, while to his new benefactor he dedicated the romantic poem, composed in his old age, of 'Yusuf and Zulaikha,' on the love of Potiphar's wife for Joseph. In the bard's last days the longing came upon him to return to his old home at Tus, where he died of a broken heart, it is said, on hearing a little child in the market-place repeating verses from his terrible satire.

The story goes on to say that Mahmud in the meanwhile had relented of his anger, and had despatched to the city of Tus a magnificent caravan with gifts fully equivalent to the promised gold pieces of which Firdausi had been disappointed. But all too late. The treasure-laden camel train entered the city gate as the funeral cortège was conducting the dead poet's body to the grave. The final details are best told in the words of Nizami of Samarkand, who visited Firdausi's tomb in the year 1116 or 1117 A.D.

Mahmud ordered that sixty thousand *dinars* worth of indigo should be given to Firdausi, and that this indigo should be carried to Tus on the King's own camels, and that apologies should be tendered to Firdausi.¹ For years the Minister [al-Maimandi, the friend of Firdausi] had been working for this, and at length he had achieved his work; so now he caused the camels to be loaded, and the indigo safely reached Tabaran [a part of the city of Tus]. But even as the camels entered the Rudbar Gate, the corpse of Firdausi was borne forth from (*birān*) the Gate of Rizan [or Razan]. Now at that time there was in Tabaran a preacher, whose fanaticism was such that he declared that he would not suffer Firdausi's body to be buried in the Musulman Cemetery because he was a Rafidi [Shiite]; and nothing that men could say would serve to move him. Now, inside (*darūn*) the gate there was a piece of property (*milk*) belonging to Firdausi, which they call the Garden of Firdausi, or Paradise;² and in that garden, which was his property, they made his grave; and there he lies to this day. And I visited his tomb in the year 510 A.H. (1116-1117 A.D.).³

¹ The text of the *Chahār Maḳāla* (ed. Mirza Muhammad, in the *Gibb Memorial Series*, ed. Browne, p. 51) has the word *dinār*, referring to gold pieces, while Ibn Isfandiar's text (ed. Ethé, *ZDMG.* 48. 93) has *dirham*, referring to silver coins. The former reading is to be preferred, judging from the whole point of the story. On the 'indigo' (*nīl*) compare the epithet 'Indigo Gate' referred to below.

² In this particular sentence I have departed from Professor Browne's rendering, which is 'outside the gate' because the text of the *Chahār Maḳāla* and that of Ibn Isfandiar both say *darūn*, 'inside' the gate, unless we are to consider that this word was misread for *birūn*, which is less likely, judging from the sequel. The precise wording of the text in Ibn Isfandiar's version of the story (ed. Ethé, *ZDMG.* 48. 94) is: *Firdausīrā darūn darvāzah milkī būd — Bāgh-i Firdausī mīguftand — dar ān bāgh, kih milk-i ū būd* (these four words omitted in manu-

script O) *dafn kardand*, 'inside the gate there was a piece of property belonging to Firdausi—they call it the Garden (Paradise) of Firdausi—and in that garden, which was his property, they made his grave.' The text of the *Chahār Maḳāla* (ed. p. 51) has *darūn darvāzah bāghī būd, milk Firdausī ūrā, dar ān bāgh dafn kardand*, 'inside the gate was a special garden, Firdausi's own property, and in that garden they made his grave.' The account by Daulatshah (1487 A.D.) agrees in the main points, as noted below.

³ The rendering here adopted (with the special departures noted) is by Browne, *JRAS.* 1899, pp. 83-84, and *Lit. Hist. Persia*, 2. 187-188 from the *Chahār Maḳāla* of Nizami of Samarkand (completed before 1150 A.D.) ed. Mirza Muhammad, p. 51 (*Gibb Memorial Series*, London, 1910), supplemented by the text of the same story given by Ibn Isfandiar (1216 A.D.) ed. Ethé, *ZDMG.* 48. 93-94.



THE BRIDGE OVER THE KASHAF RIVER AT TUS



RUINED WALLS OF TUS AT THE SITE OF THE FORMER RUDBAR GATE

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

With all these reminiscences in mind, I felt a keen sense of delight at the prospect of this visit to Tus in company with our host, and before daybreak the cavalcade was ready at the door of the consulate to start on our excursion. The Afghan *savārs*, finely mounted horsemen, with their dark blue and white streamers floating over their shoulders from their pointed gilt-woven caps, were already in the saddle, and took the lead as we cantered out of Mashad at 5.15 A.M., in the direction of Tus, the home of Firdausi, lying some fifteen miles to the northwest.

As we dashed forward at rapid pace, Major Sykes and I laughingly said that our friend Cochran should have carried a handicap weight, for his horse's nose was soon far in the lead, and we had to take with a smile the dust which he and the swift *savārs* raised up by their horses' heels. But the distance to be covered at the quick pace set seemed short; almost before we thought of it we had passed the remains of an old enclosure that doubtless belonged to Tus, and had left behind the ruins of Shahr-i Band, or 'City of the Dam,' which must have been one of the oldest settlements of the town,¹ so that soon we found ourselves galloping through green fields, reddened with poppies, along the historic Kashaf Rud, or 'Tortoise Stream,' in sight of Firdausi's Rudbar Gate and of the walls of ruined Tus.²

The famous bridge that leads over the stream into the ruined town is a span of eight arches, about a hundred yards in extent, and eighteen feet broad, with a passageway fourteen feet wide, and it leads to the Rudbar Gate, which lies a hundred and twenty yards beyond its egress, and which I heard called the 'Indigo Gate,' in reminiscence, it would seem, of the camel train laden with precious indigo which Mahmud sent only too late.³

¹ On these sites see Fraser, p. 520, and Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1114.

² The Kashaf River is mentioned in Bd. 20. 7, 30, under the form Kasak Ruṭ, and is alluded to several times under the form Kasah Rud in the *Shāh Nāmah* (cf. Mohl, 2. 511, 512,

515, 517, 529, 559; cf. also Justi, *Beiträge zur alt. Geog. Pers.* 2. 17, 18; Geiger, *Ostirānische Kultur*, pp. 119–121).

³ It appears that the high-spirited daughter of Firdausi refused to accept the gift for herself after her father's

The crumbling walls of the dead city were once broad and lofty ramparts of clay and rubble, much like those already mentioned at Bustam and Rai, but they had become much flattened with the lapse of ages, although traces of their towers were still to be seen, while their outline showed the contour of the town, which must have formed a very irregular quadrilateral, following roughly the points of the compass. The Rudbar, or 'River,' Gate, which still carries the alternate epithet derived from the indigo, is in the southern wall, close by the bridge over the Kashaf River, as has been already described. The Rizan (or Razan) Gate, associated with the story of Firdausi's burial, enters the circumvallation on the northeastern side.¹ The Ark, or Citadel, whose ruins catch the eye as it sweeps over the great enclosure, lies on the northern side of the ruined city; while traces of old-time watercourses intersect the immense expanse at several points.²

The scene, as we saw it, presented a strange paradox of the destructive effects of the hand of man and the eternal power of nature to rise and bloom again. The devastating inroads of the Ghuzz hordes and the Mongol armies, aided by earthquakes, had indeed laid mighty Tus in ruins; but its dust still contains the resurrection seed of flowers and grain, bringing life anew in the midst of death. Acres of barley and fields of thick clover spread their rich green on all sides, in contrast with stretches of arid waste that told only too well the story of ruin

death; for different accounts of the building purposes for which the money was ultimately expended, see the Oriental statements quoted by Browne, *Lit. Hist. Persia*, 2. 139; Nöldeke, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 157-158.

¹ The vocalization *Rizān* (with *i*) appears to be the more correct form; see Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1118; the name is more often spelt *Razān* (with *a*) by Occidental writers, perhaps with the idea it is the 'Gate of the Vines' (*razān*).

² My description of the ruins of Tus was written in 1909, before the appearance of the interesting article by our host, Major Sykes, *Historical Notes on Khurasan*, in *JRAS.* 1910, pp. 1118-1120. Through his kindness I am able to reproduce the sketch-map of the site, and to supplement, at several points, the notes which I took on our visit together to this ancient city.

wrought in the past, while smiling masses of cornflowers, convulvi, and vetches lent their bright color to cheer the desolate scene. Mounds of bricks, out of which the lizard darted, littered the ground here and there, and round about the patient camel—a descendant, perhaps, of Mahmud's train—was lazily grazing; while the tiny hoopoe bird, with its peaked crest, recalled not only the story of how it had won its diadem by serving successfully on a message of love from King Solomon to Bilkis, the Queen of Sheba, but also the fact that it had been chosen to lead the conclave of birds that had gone in search of the throne of the Eternal God.

By this time we had reached the lofty mausoleum whose crumbling dome still forms the central feature of the ruins of Tus. Its architectural style brought back to my memory at once the tomb of Sultan Sanjar, and the building must date from about the same period (approximately 1150 A.D.) as that edifice.¹ The structure, with its vaulted crown of brickwork, is imposing, even in the dilapidated state in which it is now found. The natives know it simply as the *Mazār*, 'Shrine,' *Kasr*, 'Castle,' or *Gunbad*, 'Dome'; and it is sometimes considered to be the Tomb of Firdausi. Attractive as such an assignment might be, it is certainly an error, even if we are not absolutely sure in whose memory the building was raised.² If a

¹ On Sultan Sanjar's tomb at Merv, see Skrine and Ross, *Heart of Asia*, pp. 1142-1143.

² The mausoleum is described as the 'Tomb of Firdausi' by O'Donovan (1880), *Merv Oasis*, 2. 15-16, but without mention of the real problem of identity involved. His description of the building is well given as follows: 'It had apparently originally been plastered over, both on the inside and the outside, to the depth of two inches, by a fine gray sand concrete, much of which is still adhering even to the exterior. This had then been covered

with adhesive white plaster. Both concrete and plaster are quite as hard as the bricks.' He also observes that the cracks in the walls and dome show that the building must have suffered from an earthquake shock. As to the photograph which we took of the mausoleum, I may add that, by an unfortunate oversight, a picture of this same structure appears as the 'Tomb of Omar Khayyam' in Wishard, *Twenty Years in Persia*, p. 150, New York, 1910; it seems appropriate here to correct that misapprehension.

conjecture on this point be allowed, I would suggest that this edifice in the heart of the ruined city commemorates Hamid ibn Kahtabah, the son of the first of the Abbasid Dynasty, in the eighth century, since Yakut (1216) mentions a structure having his name as one of the noteworthy buildings of Tus, and Daulatshah (1487) certainly refers to it as the 'Abbasid Mausoleum' (*Mazār 'Abbāssiah*), when he speaks of Firdausi's grave being located near by.¹ If this be correct, it must be admitted that the existing structure must have been erected to replace an older building, for it could hardly be supposed to date back to the eighth century, for the reasons explained above.

The interior of the shrine was in as poor a condition as its exterior, though traces of the building's former dignity were perceptible. The moulded brickwork in the roof of the cupola, some seventy feet above the ground, showed the honeycomb design, which might easily be matched in the shrine of Sanjar at Merv. Beneath the dome the main chamber itself opened, on the eastern side, into a vaulted niche that evidently formed the sepulchral chapel, while the other sides presented nothing more than empty arches.

On the dusty floor of the mausoleum lay two fragments of heavy gravestones, which seemed at first to form parts of a single block, rudely broken across, but which later I judged to be portions of two different cenotaphs, considering the size of

¹ The reference in Yakut is translated by Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. géog.* p. 396, as 'la maison d'Hamid ben Qahtabah'; for the allusion by Daulatshah, see Browne, *Tadhkirat, or Memoirs of Dawlatshāh*, p. 54, London, 1901, and *Lit. Hist. Persia*, 2. 138, n. 4; on the early Abbasids, see Skrine and Ross, *Heart of Asia*, pp. 83-85. Regarding the mausoleum, Fraser, p. 518, says that he could find no satisfactory account of it, though one of the two reports he heard assigned it to 'Boork-e-Asswud,' 'sup-

posed to have been a black slave, a friend and companion of our Saviour'; the other report, to the effect that it contained the bones of the martyred 'Shah Zadeh Mahrook,' is certainly to be rejected in the light of what has been said above, p. 242, regarding the Imam of that name. A suggestion might be made to call it the tomb of Harun ar-Rashid, were it not for the fact that Harun's burial-place was by the side of Imam Riza at what is now Mashad, as told in the preceding chapter.

the larger one and the tenor of the inscriptions involved.¹ This view may, however, be open to correction by some one who re-examines the spot; but I have in its favor the support of Major Sykes's statement in a letter which he wrote me from Mashad, dated December 3, 1908, to the effect that 'both of these tombs were brought in from outside.' The larger one, though broken, is a heavy stone of a bluish gray color, measuring over six feet in length (or, more exactly, seventy-six inches long, by sixteen broad, and fifteen high); and it lay, as we saw it, directly beneath the dome, resting north and south. The other stone, a fragment, lay to the left of this, at an angle pointing northwest and southeast; but the position of either block is likely to be changed at any moment, for there was no evidence of anything to show permanence in the way that they were placed. So far as the inscriptions could be deciphered, Major Sykes kindly wrote me, the one records, 'This is the tomb of the high protection of Saïdism and nobility, the richly-endowed; the deceased, forgiven . . .'; and the other reads, 'This is the tomb of her Highness, the bounteous lady, the hidden Mavtash Khanum, daughter of the noble . . .' Neither of these inscriptions, so far as legible, seems to contribute anything that

¹ O'Donovan, *Merv Oasis*, 2. 16, spoke of these stones as 'the two fragments of a stone coffin, which had been rudely smashed in a longitudinal direction. The top and sides are carved with finely executed inscriptions, verses from the Koran. My guide, an old Turkoman, told me that this coffin had been broken open only two years previously by Russian travellers who visited the place, and who carried away with them two inscribed marble tablets which had been inserted, one in the northern, the other in the southern wall. I myself saw the two vacant spaces in which these tablets had been, the wooden pegs at the rear still remaining; but the demolition of

the coffin, to judge from the appearance of the fractured parts, was of remote date, probably effected by the fall of some part of the building during the earthquake shock which ruined it. It is now completely empty, and there are marks, evidently of a recent date, as of an iron wedge forced in after some preliminary chipping with a chisel.' This description seems to require correction so far as the inscriptions afford evidence that two separate tombs appear to be concerned, and certainly needs revision as to the notion that the blocks formed part of a regular coffin instead of a cenotaph over some grave in which the body was interred.

might be used towards determining the identification of the mausoleum.

As I gazed out of the dilapidated portal upon the ruined walls of the desolate city that once had been the heart of Eastern Iran, an owl in the domed cupola above fluttered its wings and uttered a dismal hoot. No words could better describe the situation — melancholy as Poe's lines on the 'Raven' — than those which serve as a motto to this chapter;¹ and they are paralleled by a quatrain ascribed to Omar: —

'I saw a bird perched on the walls of Tús,
Before him lay the skull of Kai Kawús,
And thus he made his moan, "Alas, poor king!
Thy drums are hushed, thy 'larums have rung truce.'"²

My comrades had meanwhile left me to the ruminations aroused by the scene and its associations, and had ridden forward in a northeasterly direction toward the Rizan Gate. Quickly vaulting into the saddle, I cantered after them, observing, as I rode, that the mountains beyond the ancient site were still capped with snow, even though it was June, while nearer lay a row of low swelling green hills. This was the 'Mountain of Tus' of the Pahlavi Bundahishn, with 'Lake Sovbar,' now Chashmah-i Sabz, on its summit.³ Together we all galloped out of the Rizan Gate to have a glimpse of the surroundings of Firdausi's home, and we were interested, above all, in the problem of possibly locating the position of his tomb.

The view generally held by scholars who have touched upon the subject is that Firdausi was buried outside of the city,⁴

¹ For the Persian text of this quatrain by Shahid of Balkh, see Pizzi, *Chrestomathie persane*, p. 57, and Ethé, *Rūdagī's Vorläufer und Zeitgenossen*, in *Morgenländische Forschungen* (Fleischer Festschrift), p. 44, Leipzig, 1875; also Darmesteter, *Origines de la poésie persane*, pp. 27-28, Paris, 1887.

² See Whinfield, *The Quatrains of Omar Khayyam*, p. 186 (no. 277); cf. Payne's version, p. 122 (no. 492).

³ Bd. 22. 3, cf. Bd. 12. 24. See also Sykes, *Geog. Journ.* 87. 3-4. Cf. pp. 212, n. 1; p. 279, note, above.

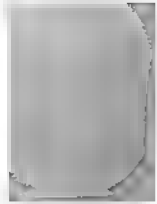
⁴ The idea seems to have been connected with the fact that Firdausi's body was actually carried out of the



THE COLUMBIAN MAUSOLEUM AT ITS

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while local tradition holds that he was buried within the walls, a view that appears to be borne out by the oldest and most authentic Persian sources quoted above. Thus Nizami of Samarkand (1116), who wrote less than a century after the poet's death, and Ibn Isfandiar (1216), who lived somewhat later, both expressly say that Firdausi's grave was 'inside' the city, as noted in the passage translated above. Additional weight is lent to this evidence by the statement of Daulatshah that 'his grave is in the city of Tus in the vicinity of (or 'beside' — *bi-janb*) the Abbasid Mausoleum, and today a great tomb is established for him, and there is a shelter for the visitor in that tomb.'¹ In view of the facts concerned, there seems little doubt that the interment was made within the town after the body had been actually 'borne forth from the Gate of Rizan' (as stated in the quotation above from the Persian of Nizami of Samarkand)² to the Muhammadan Cemetery, which was probably located outside the town, and where the objection was raised to Firdausi's being buried in consecrated ground. The obstacle was overcome by selecting 'a piece of property inside the gate,' a garden belonging to himself, and which bore his name afterwards, as the Persian says. I urge this plea the

city for burial in the Moslem cemetery, though it was denied interment in consecrated ground, as noted below. Among those who, by implication or directly, assume that the grave was outside are: Ouseley, *Biographical Notices of Persian Poets*, p. 89, London, 1846; Mohl, *Livre des rois*, 1. lii; Warner, *Shāhnāma*, 1. 45, London, 1905; Nöldeke, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 157 ('ausserhalb der Stadt'); and the same is implied by Browne, *JRAS.* 1899, p. 84, and *Lit. Hist. Persia*, 2. 138, 'outside the gate,' although the received Persian text has 'inside (*darūn*) the gate,' as was pointed out above, unless we are to regard that as a misreading for *birūn*, which seems un-

likely in view of the material here presented.

¹ Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat*, ed. by Browne, p. 54, and cf. Browne, *Lit. Hist. Persia*, 2. 138, n. 4; also Vullers, *Fragm. Relig. Zoroaster*, p. 12, Bonn, 1831, who translates, 'sein Grab ist in der Stadt Tus nahe dem Orte Mesar Abbasa.'

² See above, p. 284. The story of Firdausi's corpse being carried out of one gate as Mahmud's camels arrived by the other is repeated also in substance by Jami in the *Baharistan* (Seventh Garden); see Jami, *Baharistan*, tr. for the *Kama Shashtra Society*, p. 141, Benares, 1887.

more strongly on account of the excellence of the sources quoted, and because of the persistent local belief that the grave is within the walls, as well as the fact that there is no sign of a tomb found outside the Rizan Gate.¹

After we had ridden out of the Rizan Gate, we found an old man named Mullah Muhammad, who told us that he could point out the spot inside the walls where Firdausi's grave was located. Following his lead, we rode along the northern wall to a point not quite half a mile east of the Ark, and then passed once more within the ramparts to a spot two hundred yards distant from the wall, and about six hundred yards east of the Citadel. There the old man pointed out the place which he said marked Firdausi's grave. A low wall enclosed a rough square, perhaps ten or fifteen yards in each direction; and near the middle of it the old man indicated the spot which he claimed was the grave. The whole ground was cluttered with bricks, and among them were some blue tiles; but there was nothing to denote that Persia's greatest epic poet had been buried there. Our aged guide added, however, that some twenty years previously, a Governor of Khurasan, named Asaf ad-Daulah Shirazi, had started to build on the site a tomb worthy of Firdausi's memory; but as he was afterwards deprived of his office, the building was never finished.

Although wishing to believe that the spot thus indicated represents the real site of Firdausi's final resting-place, I do not hesitate to say that our friend Sykes wrote me a letter a year afterwards, saying he had learned later that the location of the spot was said to have been due to the dream of a Said. Still such dreams, especially when they come at a moment opportune to a governor's wish, are apt to be based upon some sort of tradition, or one not likely to be out of harmony with the general local view on the subject.² It was the desire of Cochran and

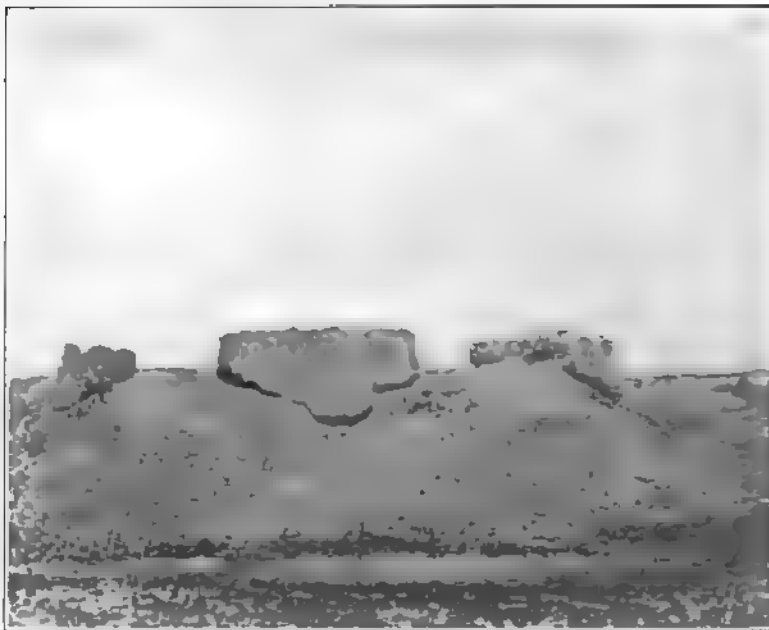
¹ This latter point is noticed also by Major Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1120.

² Although fully convinced that the

burial-place of Firdausi was within the town walls, the location of the precise spot may be open to question.



THE CITADEL OF TUS FROM A DISTANCE
(With the Dome of the Mausoleum in the background)



INNER FORTRESS OF THE CITADEL OF TUS



OUR GUIDE POINTING OUT THE SUPPOSED LOCATION OF FIRDAUSI'S GRAVE



AT THE RIZAN GATE OF RUINED TES

myself, after returning to America, to arrange for the erection of a simple monument on the spot ; but the unsettled state of affairs prevailing at the time in Persia rendered temporarily advisable a postponement of the plan. But should any monument be needed ? Firdausi himself, even in the *de profundis* moments of darkest despondency, rises to the heights and cries out with a vaunt, proud as the boast of Horace,

‘ From poesy I’ve raised a tower high
Which neither wind nor rain can ever harm ;
Over this work the years shall come and go,
And he that wisdom hath shall learn its charm ;’¹

and again, with assurance of undying fame, he closes the great poem : —

‘ I shall live on ; the seeds of words have I
Sown broadcast, and I shall not wholly die.’²

Mounting our horses again, we rode in a westerly direction towards the citadel which once formed the stronghold of the town. It was raised upon an artificial mound, covering an area about an acre in extent, and was square in form. A double wall and fosse lent strength to the fortification, the inner gate being strategically located at a point not opposite but widely removed, so as to prevent the place from being rushed in case of storm ; and the redoubts of the interior fort showed a heavy causeway and deep ditch to add to the security of the whole. But all these precautions proved to be of no avail when the

I am not sure whether the place we saw is the same that was pointed out to Fraser, in 1822, for it is not quite clear from the context whether his reference to the gate is to the Rizan or, more probably, to the Rudbar. He writes as follows (*Narrative*, p. 519) : ‘ A little way from the gate of entrance, there stands a dome ornamented with lacquered tiles, so small that I thought at first it must have formed a part of some private house ;

this dome covers the dust of the celebrated poet Ferdousee, who, after the unworthy treatment he received from Shah Mahmood Ghisnavée, retired there to die.’

¹ Firdausi, *Shāh Nāmāh*, ed. Vullers-Landauer, 3. 1275, ll. 69–70. Compare Horace, *Odes*, 3. 30.

² Compare also Nöldeke, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 159 ; Warner, *Shāh-nāmā*, 1. 46, London, 1905.

tempest of war passed over the site, for ruin and desolation reigned here, as elsewhere, supreme.

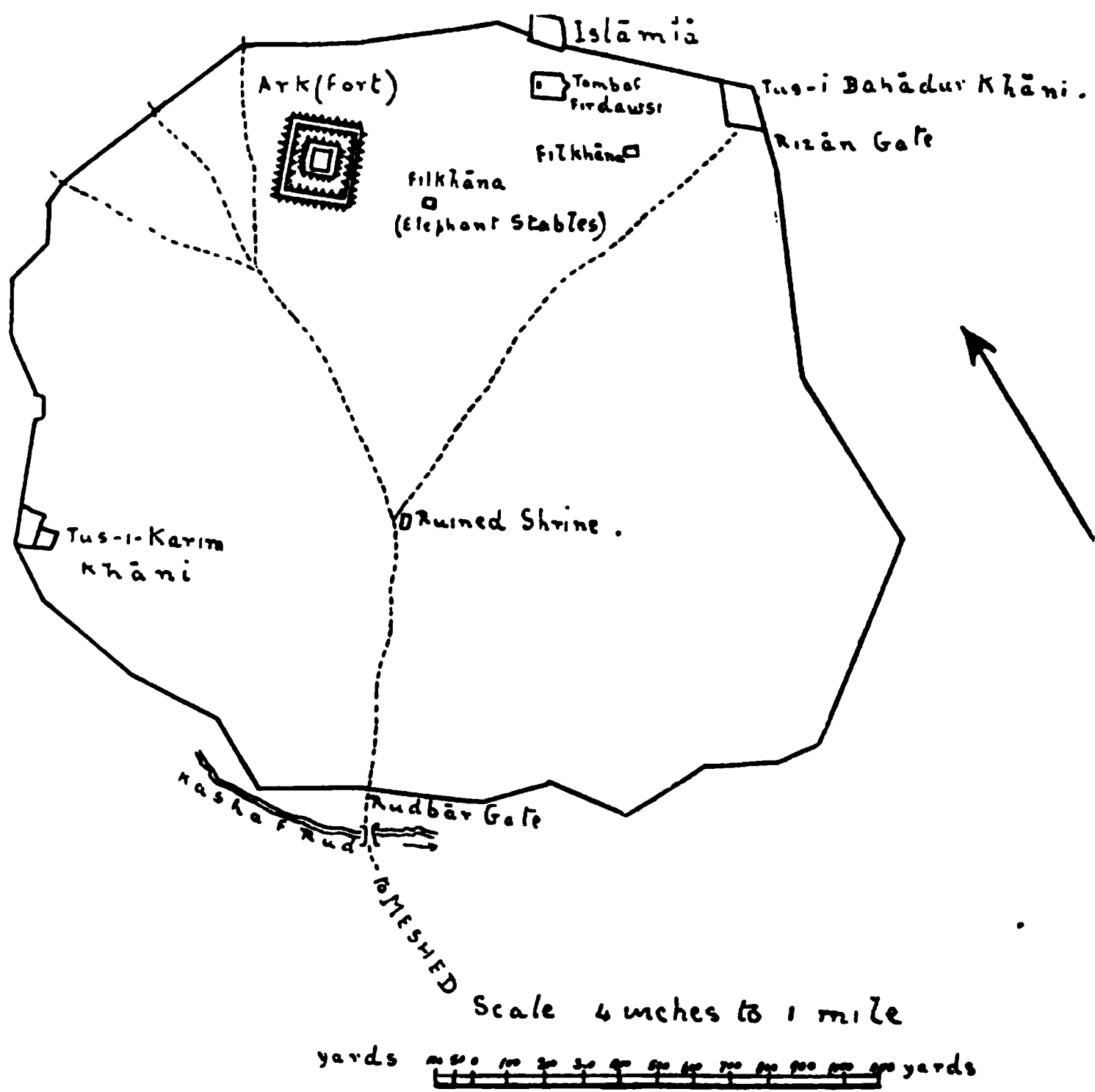
At no great distance from the citadel, and lying in an easterly and southeasterly direction, are two sets of ruins, known as the *Fil-khānah*, 'Elephant-stables,' possibly marking the site of the buildings devoted to that purpose, although this is by no means certain.¹ There is another structure in the southwest wall of the town, as noted on the sketch-map, but of this I am not able to give any account, nor again of the minaret mentioned in 1822 by Fraser (p. 518) as constructed of beautiful masonry, although, regarding it, he adds : 'There is not above fifteen or twenty feet in height of it now standing, and not a vestige of the building to which it must have belonged.'

From the Persian quotations given above, it is clear that the ruined site of Tus we had been examining, with the Rudbar and Rizan Gates, formed part of the borough of Tabaran, an important section of the town in Firdausi's day, when the city covered a large area comprising several thickly populated centres, as we know from the Oriental geographers of the tenth century, or the period covering the better portion of the poet's life. According to the authority of Istakhri and Ibn Haukal, at that time, as cited in the preceding chapter (p. 267), four boroughs—Radkan, Tabaran, Bazdghur, and Naukan—made up the metropolis of historic Tus. The section Tabaran has just been explained.² Radkan is represented, in part at least, by the settlement of that name, nearly twenty miles northwest of the historic city, covering a considerable area still marked by a conical tower, which resembles the one at Bustam alluded to above (p. 196), whose age cannot be very much later than the poet's time.³ Bazdghur has been conjecturally identified with the site of the

¹ See Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1119.

² See also Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1115, and compare the allusions to it and to Naukan in Ibn Khurdadbah, Kudamah, and Mukaddasi referred to by Sprenger, *Postroueten*, p. 15.

³ On Radkan see Idrisi (1154 A.D.), 2. 184; Yakut (1220), pp. 252, 257; and compare O'Donovan, *Merv*, 2. 19-24; Curzon, *Persia*, 1. 120; Yate, *Khurasan*, pp. 362-365; Sykes, *Geog. Journ.* 37. 2.



SKETCH-MAP OF THE RUINS OF TUS
(By Major P. M. Sykes)

modern village of Paz, a short distance south of Rizan, and not far from the ruins of Tus.¹ Finally, Naukan (generally called Noghan today) formed, with Tabaran, the larger section of Tus, lying nearer the present Mashad, and occupied a once thickly populated area northeast and east of that more modern city which has absorbed it.² This was the particular borough of Tus that contained the tombs of Imam Riza and Harun ar-Rashid, as was seen in the preceding chapter.

Tus, in its long history, has been the home of many famous and learned men besides Firdausi. His predecessor Dakiki, according to some, came from Tus.³ The great Moslem thinker, al-Ghazali, was born here in 1059 A.D. and laid the early foundations of his learning at one of the collegiate institutions in Tus, which later won him a professorship in the Niddhamiyya College at Baghdad, endowed by a native of Tus, the celebrated Nizam al-Mulk, the friend of Omar Khayyam.⁴ After giving up his lectureship at Baghdad, al-Ghazali taught for a time in the college at Nishapur, but returned to his own city, and died there December 18, 1111, leaving behind him some seventy philosophical and doctrinal works that bear his name. The poet Anvari is said to have studied at the college of Tus about the year 1150.⁵ The poet Asadi the Younger, the author of a heroic poem on Garshasp, or Kershaspa, that was modeled on the epic of Firdausi, who had been his father's pupil, was likewise

¹ See Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1116. This Pāz, as Sykes remarks, appears in older documents as Pāzh, but under the Arabs as Bāz. It is the same as the village of Bāzh, which, according to the *Chahār Makāla*, p. 47 (tr. Browne, *JRAS.* 1899, p. 77), was the real birthplace of the poet or else his country-seat. It may be observed that Ibn Isfandiar (ed. Ethé, *ZDMG.* 48. 90) does not mention Bāzh, but speaks only of 'the quarter Tabaran.' Daulatshah (ed. Browne, p. 50) says Firdausi's birthplace, according to some,

was 'the village Rizan, belonging to Tus'; cf. Vullers, *Fragmente über die Religion des Zoroaster*, p. 8, Bonn, 1831.

² Cf. Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1116.

³ Cf. Nöldeke, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 147; Ethé, *Grundr.* 2. 222.

⁴ See above, p. 254. Nizam al-Mulk was born in the outlying suburb of Tus called Radkan, mentioned in the preceding paragraph; see Yakut, p. 252.

⁵ Cf. Browne, *Lit. Hist. Persia*, 2. 366; Ethé, *Grundr.* 2. 262.

a native of Tus ; and the scientific writer Nasir ad-Din (1200–1274), whose learned works, especially on astronomy, gained him a position at the court of the Mongol ruler Hulagu, was known by the title ‘Tusi’ from the place of his birth.¹

The whole region round about us, as we spurred our horses over it (the fine Afghan riders still in the lead), seemed to live again with memories of the historic past — memories made bright by Firdausi’s name and fame. A golden sheen from the afternoon sun poured over the widespread tract and turned the clouds of dust swept up by our galloping cavalcade into a burnished halo that crowned the ruined town. Then slowly the powdery vapor sifted down once more into the barren waste, mingling itself with the dust of ages that covers this ancient site.

¹ On these names see Browne, *Lit.* 175–176 (Nizam al-Mulk); 272–276 (*Hist. Persia*, 2. 203–206 (al-Ghazali); (Asadi); 484–486 (Nasir ad-Din Tusi).



NADER SHAH
(1748-1749 A.D.)



STARTING ON THE LAST STAGE OF THE JOURNEY

11

CHAPTER XXII

AU REVOIR TO PERSIA

‘ ’Tis not to say farewell, adieu — but simply au revoir.’

WE were now on the last two days of our journey through northern Persia before crossing over into Transcaspia and Turkistan; and our place of encampment for the night was to be on the slope of a hill near the little village of Danah, about four hours northwest of Tus, and a few miles off the main road leading from Mashad to Kuchan and Askhabad. The tents and the kit had been sent on in advance with the baggage mules, while we followed at a good pace with our cavalcade.


Some picturesque villages were passed early on the way: Chahar Burj, with its ‘four towers,’ as the name implies; Kasimabad, cheery with its willow-shaded brook; and Nau-bahar, a little hamlet, whose designation of ‘Youthful Spring’ seemed to us particularly appropriate at the moment, for the season was much belated for the third of June. At last we reached Gunabad, the small settlement mentioned above (p. 212), lying to the northeast of the Binalud Peak of the Nishapur Range, and recalling, by its antique name, legends connected with Isfandiar, the champion in the holy wars of Zoroastrianism against Turan.¹

The region round about was filled with reminiscences of the Turkoman forays carried on as recently as a generation ago. Our own special guide Riza, the *ghulām* (‘boy, servant’) of Major Sykes, was a living example of the hardships brought by these raids which had so often carried Persian captives away as booty for sale in the slave markets of Khiva and Bukhara, and Riza had a graphic tale to tell of his experiences,

¹ On the Binalud Peak see Yate, *Khorasan*, pp. 855–857.

though his reticence was great. The Turkomans plundered his native village while he was still a boy, and carried him off as one of the prizes of their raid. Sold into servitude, he was reared as a Turkoman and lived for years among them, until the day when the Persians turned the tables against their old foes, and paid them a punitive visit. Riza was among the human chattels recovered; and his uncle chanced to recognize him, paid for his ransom, and brought him to Mashad. Though well on in years, Riza retained his Turkoman garb, the furry cap and belted dress that had been forced upon him in his youth, so that he looked the veritable son of the northern deserts, and I took him at first for one of the tribe of Turan. Like his Turanian captors, he was a superb horseman; and it was a delight to watch him gallop ahead, after the manner of an Indian scout on the prairies, to point out the best track for our horses to take, and then dash back to see if we were following the lead aright. It was he who knew the one and only place where the torrent stream of Ab-kat could be forded with safety, so that without mishap we reached our encampment, whose white tents we had for some time been watching in the distance, dotting the hillside not far from Danah.

The Khan of the village, whose local dignity was the greater because he was a Saïd, or descendant of Muhammad, came to the camp directly after our arrival, in order to make a formal call of welcome. One of his retinue carried a black lamb in his arms, the sacrifice of which, alas, formed part of the proffered hospitality. The Khan, though well informed on local matters, knew nothing about any ancient legends connected with the territory; but he told of a rock-hewn cave, with eighteen chambers, that could be found excavated in the steep slope of a hill near Nauzad, a village about two farsakhs distant. Some later traveler may perhaps visit the spot, and may possibly find something of interest. We ourselves were unfortunately prevented from making the trip because of the excursion which we had planned to a different site on the morrow.





CARAVAN AT HALT



TIRKOMANS AT THE RAILWAY STATION OF ASKHABAD

This itinerary included a visit to the mountain cavern, called *Pardah-i Rustam*, or 'the Curtain of Rustam's Harem,' located near Mount Firuzi, and we started at daybreak.¹ The lofty retreat which formed our goal is a cavernous opening in the ledge of a high scarped rock, and it may well have been very like the mountain fastness in which Isfandiar was imprisoned by his father, Vishtasp, for that dungeon was in this vicinity, as told above (p. 209). Indeed, it is not impossible that this cavern was actually the hero's dungeon. We climbed the cliff, and Sykes rounded the crag to examine the interior of the cave, but nothing was found to help towards a real identification of the site. After examining a chasm in another of these scarped heights,² we returned to our tented quarters for an early luncheon, and then broke camp in order to examine some ruins near Kislak Kalat, 'the Daughter's Fort,' as well as to study the old site occupied by the modern town of Manijan, said to be called after a daughter of Afrasiab, the legendary ruler of Turan.³ The chief reward of our search was the finding of a great slab of quarried limestone (fifteen feet long by seven and a half wide, and one foot in thickness), marked with inscribed letters, partly effaced, but containing the name of Muhammad Khvarazm Shah, one of the famous kings of Khiva, who invaded Khurasan in the beginning of the thirteenth century.⁴

¹ On the character of these scarped hills, which form a part of the Nishapur Range, see Yate, *Khurasan*, p. 355, where the ridge is spoken of as Chil-i Shah.

² This contained some curious clay, which the natives eat, and which they claimed to be an excellent remedy in the case of throat troubles; on this subject see Sykes, *Geog. Journ.* 37. 4.

³ See also Yate, *Khurasan*, p. 359. The story of the loves of Manizhah, Afrasiab's daughter, and the Iranian hero Bizhan forms one of the most charming episodes of Firdausi's *Shāh*

Nāmāh (tr. Mohl, 3. 231-327; cf. also Nöldeke, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 165, 173, 177).

⁴ See p. 220 above. Since this paragraph was written, I have found that Yate, *Khurasan*, pp. 359-360, also refers to this inscribed stone. His remarks on the subject are well worth repeating. He describes it as 'a large flat piece of limestone, or some light-coloured rock, lying prone on the ground, about fourteen or fifteen feet in length, six to eight in breadth, and from one to two feet in thickness. On the southern edge of this stone was an

But the hour had arrived when our host, Major Sykes, had to return to Mashad, and we were due to pursue our journey to Kuchan and the frontier, more than a day's distance beyond. The post-phæton was already waiting for us; and my comrade and I accordingly dismounted from our horses, and took places in the rumbling vehicle. Regretfully we said good-by, or an *au revoir*, till we should meet three years later in London, and waving anew a *khuda hafs*, we whirled away amid clouds of dust.

Our route again led us, part of the way, along the track of Alexander, who is believed to have come down the valley of the Kashaf Rud on his march to Tus.¹ The post-road along this course runs northwest from where we were to Kuchan, some seventy-five miles distant, and then strikes due north over the great mountain barrier that separates Persia from Turkistan. For over eight dusty hours we traveled, and evening was beginning to fall as we entered Kuchan.²

Inscription in a single line in large, roughly cut Arabic letters. The stone did not give one the idea of ever having been a slab cut for inscription. On the contrary, it appeared to be a natural piece of rock left lying in the middle of the plain by some freak of nature. It rang when struck like so much metal. The only words that could be deciphered were the three in the centre of the line, viz. Muhammad Khwarazm Shah. There was evidently a date in Arabic words following these, but it was illegible. On looking up the history of this Muhammad Khwarazm Shah, I found that he fled to Khurasan in the year 617 A.H. (1220 A.D.), and that Changiz Khan sent two generals with 30,000 cavalry in pursuit of him, one of whom came to Tus and Radkan. It is possible, therefore, that this Sultan Muhammad Shah saw this stone in his flight and had his name engraved upon it. The same Sultan Muhammad is also mentioned by Elias

in his *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, pp. 287-290. There is another Khwarazm Shah mentioned as well, but his name was Sultan Atsar Khwarazm Shah, not Muhammad. He is said to have died at Khurramdara, of Kuchan, in the year 551 A.H. (= 1156 A.D.). Whether there is any connection between Khurramdara and Khurramabad it is impossible to say. Atsar was the son of Muhammad, the son of Anushtagin, who was born in 490 A.H. (1096 A.D.), and possibly the inscription may have been Atsar bin Muhammad Khwarazm Shah, and this stone was in reality his tombstone, though now so rough and chipped. If any one hereafter is able to decipher the date, the question will be settled.

¹ So Droysen, *Geschichte Alexanders*, p. 281, n. 4; Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, 2. 65; Sykes, *JRAS.* 1910, p. 1114.

² Kuchan, or its predecessor, the Khabushan of the Arab geographers

The town of Kuchan, the head of a principality, is the hereditary seat of the Il-Khans, or ruling lords of the territory, and is remembered in history because in June, 1747, the conqueror Nadir Shah was treacherously slain beneath its walls by some of

(a name which is still preserved in a settlement lying ten miles northwest of the town), must have been in existence before the eleventh century of our era, since Yakut (about 1220) refers to Khabushan as 'the birthplace of Abu'l-Harath, who died about 430 A.H. (1038 A.D.)'; see Yakut, tr. Barbier de Meynard, p. 196 and n. 1. The identity of Kuchan and Khabushan is accepted by Fraser, *Narrative*, p. 554 ('Cochoon, or Kabooshan'), and by Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, pp. 377, 393. Le Strange (p. 393) writes as follows: 'The town of Kūchān, which in medieval times was called Khabūshān, or Khūjān'; and he furthermore observes that 'Yakut, who states that the name of the chief town [of the Nīsā district] was in his day pronounced Khūshān, says that ninety-three villages belonged to it. The surrounding plain he praises for its fertility, and adds that Hūlāgū Khān, the Mongol, had rebuilt Khabūshān in the seventh (thirteenth) century, his grandson Arghūn, the Il-Khān of Persia, afterwards greatly enlarging the town.'

Kuchan was also the birthplace of the poet Muhammad Riza Nau'i, who went to India in the time of Akbar the Great and died at Burhanpur, 1610 A.D., and whose poem *Sūz u Gudāz* commemorates the *satī* of a Hindu princess who burned herself on her husband's funeral pyre. Kuchan was likewise for three years the residence of the author Barkhvardar ibn Mahmud Mumtaz, who, during a marauding invasion while he was residing

there early in the eighteenth century, was robbed of all his possessions, and was even forced to recast from memory an abbreviated version of his collection of anecdotes entitled *Maḥḥilārā*, this abridgment still surviving as his *Maḥbūb al-Kulūb*; see Ethé, *Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 254, 333.

Some authorities maintain that Kuchan is to be identified in ancient times with the Parthian Arsaka of Pliny, 6. 113, and Asaak of Isidor of Charax, *Mansiones Parthicae*, 11, and regarding which the latter writer says: 'The city Asaak ('Ασαάκ) in which Arsakes the First was declared king; and an eternal fire is preserved there.' If so, it was one of the seats of early fire-worship in the third century B.C. Such is the view of Hoffmann (*Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer*, p. 291), Tomaschek (*Zur hist. Topog. Pers.*, in *Sb. Akad. Wiss. zu Wien*, 102. 227), and Justi (*Grundr. iran. Philol.* 2. 481). Nevertheless, I am inclined to identify this 'Ασαάκ with the Ashak, Ashk, or Ask, near Isfarain and Bujnurd, of the Arab geographers; see Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, p. 381; but on this point others must decide.

A list of the travelers who visited Kuchan in the nineteenth century is given by Curzon, 1. 102, n. 1, who describes his own visit in detail (1. 97-111). For some account of the ruined site of the older Kuchan (about twelve kilometers distant), which was ruined by earthquakes, see Lacoste, *Around Afghanistan*, pp. 31-33, London and New York, 1909.

his own Persian soldiers.¹ We had no time, however, to visit the spot next morning, nor to inspect the chief mosque of the town, or to see the tomb of an Imamzadah, in which Fraser, in 1822, saw some leaves that had been taken from a magnificent copy of the Kuran in the mausoleum of Timur Lang at Samarkand. These fragments, if preserved, would have been the more interesting to me after having thrice visited the tomb of Tamerlane, and having also seen the huge reading-desk, eight feet square, which served as the stand for an enormous Kuran once placed in front of the mosque of his favorite wife at Samarkand.²

The crimson hand of dawn was in the sky as we left Kuchan to cross the river Atrak and pass over the mighty mountain ridges that shut off Russian Turkistan. The Kuchan-Askhabad road is about seventy-five miles in extent, and today it can be traveled with fair comfort in a wagon.³ Soon after leaving the town we began a series of lofty ascents and deep descents which did not cease till the plain of Askhabad was reached on the other side.⁴ The views, whenever a height was reached, and where our aneroid more than once measured nearly seven thousand feet, with crests still above, were magnificent, and the air was exhilarating in the extreme; but after the ascents came descents in which we had to wind our serpentine course down into extensive valleys.⁵

In one of these gorges, which was cut by the swift stream that waters the little settlement of Durbadam and tumbles its whirling rapids under a bridge, was a narrow defile, which some day may prove a strategic point hard to be fought for in the

¹ Compare Fraser, p. 576; Curzon, 1. 109; Durand, *Nadir Shah*, in *JRAS.* 1908, p. 294.

² I hope to describe this desk more fully in a later volume, *Beyond the Caspian*.

³ On the condition of this road in 1889 see Curzon, 1. 87-92.

⁴ The territory around Zobaran, beyond Kuchan, was well cultivated.

⁵ The view was particularly fine from the height overlooking the distant territory of Daragez towards the east and the equally remote district around Shirvan towards the west. So again in the zigzag climb past Mount Sal.

event of an invasion by foreign arms. At the entrance of another ravine, overtopped by towering mountains, we found a caravan halted. As we drove up we noticed a flutter of excitement pass over the otherwise stolid faces of the company. One of the camel-drivers had been taken suddenly ill, and breathed his last just as we reached the spot. Slowly and mournfully his comrades lifted the lifeless form to the back of his own patient camel, which turned its dull eye for an instant to discover the cause of the unwonted weight; and the caravan moved silently on. Truly we were passing through the valley of the shadow of death.

Swiftly we sped forward, but it was well on in the afternoon before we reined up at the *Bāj Gīr*, or 'Custom House,' marking the limit of the Persian border, and separated only by a couple of miles from the office of the Czar's collector of imposts on the frontier of Russian Turkistan. Since dawn we had been pushing steadily on, with hardly a break, for twelve hours; and there still remained a journey of five hours before we could reach our destination at Askhabad.

Sunset was gilding the mountain tops of Iran as I watched them fading from view while we entered upon the plains that were once ancient Turan. In fancy my mind swept back over the whole area we had traversed during our long journey, and I still could see in imagination the arena of the warring strife between the historic lands. Behind us lay the country that had been the proud scene of the triumphs of Rustam, the hero of Persia's first glory. Before us stretched the level expanse where Sohrab, the son he knew not of, had marshaled the hosts of Turan against the father he had never seen. Each champion stood as a type of the blood-feud that raged for ages between the two countries, until, a generation ago, there came a hand of iron to stop it forever. The clash of arms of those foemen of old is heard no more — hushed into silence as still as the starlit night which was creeping on — the scene has shifted, and over all now floats the shadow of the wings of the Russian Eagle.

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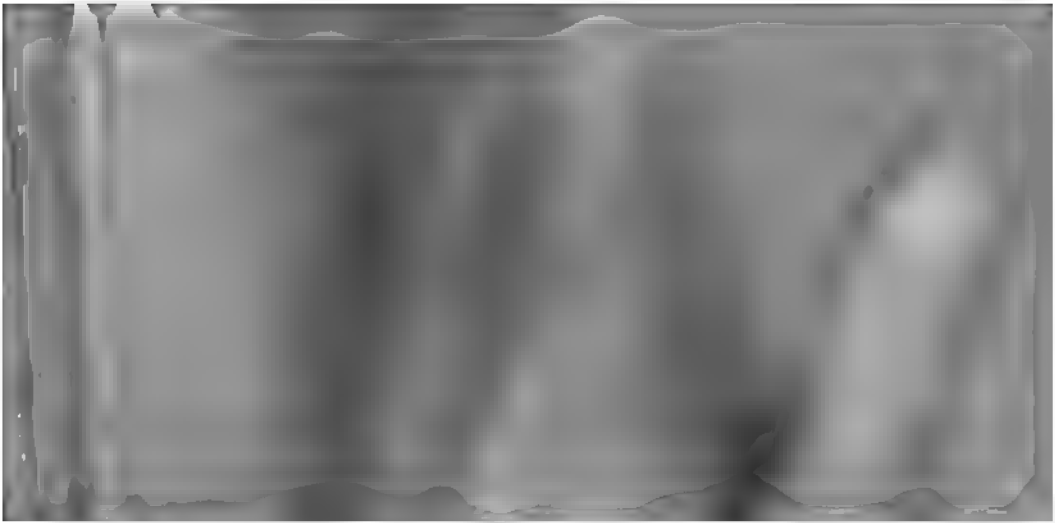
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